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# GEEKY MONKEY

MOVIES. GAMES. TV.  
TECH. TOYS. COMICS.



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ROGUE ONE  
MODEL  
KITS

// MOVIES // GAMES  
// TV // TECH // COMICS

## 2017 PREVIEW

// ALL THE BIGGEST  
GEEKY HAPPENINGS

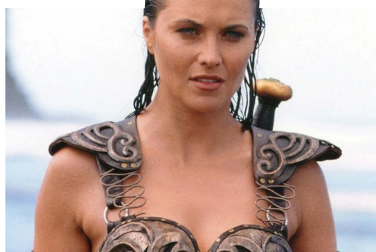
// MARVEL VS DC TV  
// STAR TREK: THE  
ANIMATED SERIES  
// RESIDENT EVIL 7  
// MORTAL KOMBAT  
// THE MAN IN THE  
HIGH CASTLE  
// TORCHWOOD

**STAR  
WARS**  
COMICS  
A GALAXY IN PRINT

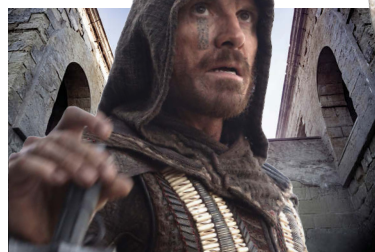
## THE PRISONER

ESCAPING THE VILLAGE

BEHIND THE SCENES OF  
**ROGUE ONE**



// XENA TALKS GEEKY



// ASSASSIN'S CREED MOVIE



// DEAD SPACE COSPLAY



// DIE-CAST DELOREAN

£4.50 ISSUE 16 JANUARY 2017





15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY RELEASE – EXCLUSIVE 4K RESTORATION

JAKE GYLLENHAAL JENA MALONE DREW BARRYMORE MARY McDONNELL KATHARINE ROSS PATRICK SWAYZE NOAH WYLE

A FILM BY RICHARD KELLY

“A MINI-MASTERPIECE”  
EMPIRE

“HAUNTING AND  
ALTOGETHER EXQUISITE”  
SIGHT & SOUND

“UNSETTLING AND  
AUDACIOUS”  
CULTUREVULTURE.NET

“EXCITINGLY ORIGINAL  
INDIE VISION”  
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

“ASTONISHINGLY  
IMAGINATIVE, POIGNANT”  
FILMFOUR.COM

“LIKE A TEEN MOVIE  
FILTERED THROUGH THE  
WORK OF DAVID LYNCH”  
VIEW LONDON

“A TERRIFIC COMBINATION  
OF BOTH LIGHT  
AND DARK TOUCHES”  
SHADOWS ON THE WALL

# DONNIE DARKO

15



BACK IN CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM DECEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup>  
DVD & BLU-RAY EDITIONS ON SALE JANUARY 9<sup>TH</sup>

PANDORA PRESENTS A FLOWER FILMS PRODUCTION A RICHARD KELLY FILM "DONNIE DARKO" JAKE GYLLENHAAL JENA MALONE DREW BARRYMORE MARY McDONNELL KATHARINE ROSS PATRICK SWAYZE NOAH WYLE COSTUME DESIGNER MANISH RAVAL MUSIC BY TOM WOLFE EDITOR MICHAEL ANDREWS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS APRIL FERRY PRODUCED BY SAM BAUER ERIC STRAND PRODUCED BY ALEXANDER HAMMOND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER STEVEN POSTER, A.S.C. PRODUCED BY DREW BARRYMORE HUNT LOWRY CASEY LA SCALA WILLIAM TYRER CHRIS J. BALL AARON RYDER PRODUCED BY SEAN MCKITTRICK NANCY JUVONEN ADAM FIELDS DIRECTED BY RICHARD KELLY

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LAKESHORE  
ENTERTAINMENT

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100



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## CONTRIBUTORS



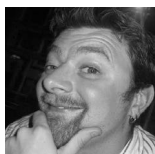
### JEM ROBERTS

Jem is an author, storyteller, comedy historian, performer and magazine man, with official books on Blackadder and Douglas Adams.



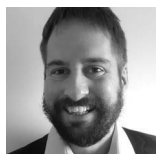
### CLAIRE LIM

Music PR by day and mega geek at all other times, Claire has a penchant for anything comic books, robots, space and superheroes.



### GREG PORTER

A copywriter, author, actor and comedian, Greg is a pop culture junkie who owns more movies, CDs, books and comics than his house can hold.



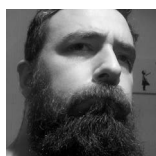
### CHRIS HALLAM

An oversized, bearded, lumbering figure, freelance writer Chris has produced half a dozen books and tons of features and reviews in the last decade.



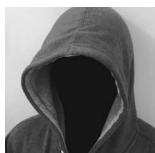
### JOHN HOULIHAN

Writer, game designer, sci-fi, fantasy and horror lover, author of the Seraph books and ex-boss of CVG – it's His Houlihan Mr Houlihan.



### MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Film enthusiast, horror hound, beard aficionado. Comic book junkie Michael is also an experienced professional wrestling journalist.



### SEBASTIAN WILLIAMSON

While most people would turn away from a dark alleyway or eerie forest, Sebastian goes skipping on ahead with a thirst for horror. Weirdo.



### ROB BURMAN

Determined to get his family to play something other than Cluedo at Christmas, Rob is on a constant hunt to discover great board games.



### HUGH DAVID

With an in-depth knowledge of global genre film, television and animation, Hugh has seen more geeky films than you've had Star Wars toys.



### JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan Clements' latest book is Christ's Samurai: The True Story of the Shimabara Rebellion, all about teenage sorcerers. Because... Japan.



## “ZHOOM!”

“What was that?” “That was 2016, mate.” “That was quick, do I get another?” “Sorry mate, that’s your lot...”

Welcome to the final issue of Geeky Monkey of 2016. The one that straddles between Christmas and New Year like the Titan of Braavos statue in Game of Thrones. What a year it’s been... can’t remember why... so let’s just hit the reset button and tell you all about the great geeky happenings coming your way in 2017. We have a packed feature starting on page six where three of our best geeky writers have put their heads together and come up with the ultimate list of delights for your year ahead, as well as nits.

We packed our intrepid reporter off to the wilds of Wales to find out whether he could escape the Village from The Prisoner – discover if he’s still there on page 44. Then, as we will have seen Rogue One: A Star Wars Story at least four times by the time you read this, we’ve put together a behind the scenes look at the movie of the year. Oh, and Benedict Cumberbatch dropped in for breakfast and a chat about becoming Doctor Strange, his Cumberbitches and the new Sherlock series. He’s on page 112.

Now a call to arms! If you enjoy reading Geeky Monkey and know some geeky friends that would love us too – have a word! Point them to [www.get-geeky.today](http://www.get-geeky.today) where they can take advantage of our great 12 month subscription offer. Then you will both have something to talk about when you meet up, rather than just staring at your pint. As usual, get in touch through Face-thingame or Twit-wotsit. Or perhaps ask Orac from Blake’s 7 to send us a message? Enjoy.

Nick Roberts

**NICK ROBERTS**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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# A GEEK'S GUIDE TO 2017

## // MOVIES



## // TV SHOWS



## // VIDEOGAMES




## // COMICS



## // TECH







AFTER AN ARGUABLY DREARY 2016, WE COULD ALL USE A PICK ME UP, AND 2017 IS SET TO BE THE PERFECT ANTIDOTE WITH AN ARRAY OF BRILLIANT MOVIES, TV SHOWS, VIDEOGAMES AND COMIC RELEASES LINED UP FOR YOUR DELECTATION PLUS SOME MIND-BENDING NEW TECH. SUPER HEROES WILL CONTINUE TO DOMINATE SCREENS BIG AND SMALL, BUT THERE ARE ENOUGH SCI-FI, HORROR AND ADVENTURE OUTINGS TO KEEP US ALL OCCUPIED. SIT BACK WITH AN EGGNOG AND ALLOW GEEKY MONKEY TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE MINEFIELD THAT WILL BE 2017...

Words: CLAIRE LIM,  
MICHAEL CAMPBELL,  
STEVE HILL

They are all living, breathing uber-geeks.

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2



# MOVIES THE YEAR OF THE SUPER HERO

Female-led action is going big this coming year with Wonder Woman, Ghost In The Shell and Star Wars: Episode VIII ready to burst your surround sound speakers. They tick off the sci-fi and super heroes in a geeky movie checklist, but when it comes to horror, Mila Jovovich gets the year off to a big bang on 3 February with **Resident Evil: The Final Chapter**. This will be the sixth and final instalment of the Resident Evil film franchise as Alice (Jovovich) returns to where it all began – Raccoon City. The Umbrella Corporation is gathering its forces ready to attack the last remaining survivors of the apocalypse. Alice, now without her powers, joins forces with some familiar faces in this action-packed finale, which will please Resident Evil fans as the gang battle through the undead hordes and mutants.

If it's powerful women you want on your screen then 2 June brings the first lead role for a lady super hero with DC Comics' **Wonder Woman**. She made her big screen debut in Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice, and although the film received mixed reviews, Gal Gadot's performance was praised. Wonder Woman will also appear alongside Batman (Ben Affleck), Superman (Henry Cavill), Aquaman (Jason Momoa), The Flash (Ezra Miller) and Cyborg (Ray Fisher) in DC's first super hero ensemble movie, **Justice League** on 17 November. Director Zack Snyder has a huge task on his hands bringing together DC's biggest super heroes and we'll also get to see super villain Steppenwolf (Ciarán Hinds) make his debut.

Over to Marvel where phase three of their cinematic universe is in full swing as the Guardians of the Galaxy and Thor return with the addition of Spider-Man. **Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2** is out 28 April

and continues a few months after the events of the first film and the ragtag crew are struggling to work as a team whilst Peter Quill (Chris Pratt) learns more about his true parentage. Keeping things intergalactic is **Thor: Ragnarok** on 27 October, this time directed by Taika Waititi (What We Do In The Shadows), so expect the usual fan pleasing action sequences and effects but with some added Waititi wit. Joining Thor (Chris Hemsworth), will be The Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), Dr Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) and the return of fan favourite Loki (Tom Hiddleston), but fans will also be treated to villain Hela (Cate Blanchett) and Grandmaster (Jeff Goldblum).

Back on Earth on 7 July, Spider-Man (Tom Holland) is trying to balance his life as a high school student with his super hero duties after the events of Captain America: Civil War in **Spider-Man: Homecoming**. Michael Keaton is Spidey's nemesis, The Vulture, and with 'homecoming' in the very title of the film, expect a back to basics, fan-pleasing approach from Marvel.

**Logan** sees Hugh Jackman don those infamous adamantium claws one last time come 2 March. The movie is set years after the events of X-Men: Days of Future Past. Logan's healing power is beginning to fade and together with Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart), they must protect a mysterious young girl named Laura, who has similar abilities to Logan. The plot is based loosely on the comic Old Man Logan and Marvel fans should already have an inkling to who Laura may be. Taking a leaf from Deadpool's X-rated book, Logan will be a violent, no holds barred, final instalment.

Sci-fi fans may (or may not!) be pleased that Blade Runner sequel **Blade Runner 2049** will be hitting our screens on 6 October. Harrison Ford reprises his role as Rick Deckard and Denis Villeneuve is in the director's chair with Ridley Scott serving as producer. Not much has been revealed yet about the plot but this is one of the most hotly anticipated films – there's a lot riding on this sequel to the cult classic.







## DIRECTOR ZACK SNYDER HAS A HUGE TASK ON HIS HANDS BRINGING TOGETHER DC'S BIGGEST SUPER HEROES

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Dystopian futures populated by AI seem to be the topic du jour as manga adapted **Ghost In The Shell** finally arrives on 31 March. Scarlet Johansson was a controversial choice as The Major, with accusations of whitewashing flooding the internet after the first image was released. The first trailer, however, showcases director Rupert Sanders' eye for a beautiful shot and there are many odes to the original animated film. Despite the controversy, hopefully the live-action film will draw attention to Masamune Shirow's iconic manga.

Back to a galaxy far, far away... **Star Wars: Episode VIII** (secondary title line still to be confirmed!) continues Rey's story where *The Force Awakens* left us... on a cliff top having finally discovered Luke Skywalker's location. Ryan Johnson is directing this time, having impressed critics and sci-fi fans alike with *Looper* back in 2012. With a 15 December slot already reserved, this is going to be the biggest movie of the year bar none with Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Adam Driver and Harris... oh, no wait.

19 May will see the release of **Alien: Covenant**, the sequel to *Prometheus* and the sixth film in the *Alien* franchise. Michael Fassbender reprises his role as synthetic David, the sole survivor of a hostile planet – I think we can guess where this one is going! Ridley Scott is back in the director's chair and after the mixed reviews *Prometheus* received back in 2012, hopefully Ridley won't let us down. Then we're really looking forward to **War for the Planet of the Apes** on 14 July where Caesar leads an army of genetically evolved apes against the humans. That's not going to end well.

If Earth-based action is more your thing there's plenty to enjoy over the next 12 months. **John Wick: Chapter 2** arrives 17 February, and after the critical acclaim the first film received, Keanu Reeves' portrayal of the vengeful hitman will be a welcome return. Let's hope no puppies were harmed in the making of the sequel! And whilst we're on the subject of sequels, Brad Pitt is back battling zombies in **World War Z 2** on 9 June. This undead series was originally intended as a trilogy, but plans for this were put on hold until the success of the first movie was assured. With \$540 million in the bank and the original costing \$190 million, the sequel has been green-lit by Paramount.

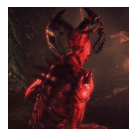


## + 20 MORE GEEKY HAPPENINGS TO TELL YOU ABOUT...

SO MANY THINGS TO GEEK OUT OVER, SO LITTLE TIME!

[NUMBER TWENTY: FEBRUARY]

### AGONY PLAYWAY

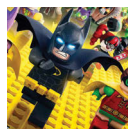


Taking the first-person survival horror genre and slamming it right down to Hell is an intriguing start for this Kickstarter funded game on PC, Xbox One and PS4. You

have the ability to control the minds of people and demons that get in your way!

[NUMBER NINETEEN: 10 FEBRUARY]

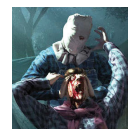
### THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE WARNER BROS



It's not very often you get an American-Danish movie collaboration, but the tiny little town in the centre of Denmark that houses the LEGO HQ has taken the world of entertainment by storm. Starring Batman, The Joker, Robin and Batgirl!

[NUMBER EIGHTEEN: SPRING]

### FRIDAY THE 13TH THE GAME GUN MEDIA



Another Kickstarter game project that is already on Beta testing with full release for Spring and single player for the Summer. Friday the 13th has been the ultimate horror for generations, and this PC, PS4 and Xbox One game brings Jason back to life with glee.

## TV THE RETURN OF A SCI-FI LEGEND

Marvel's gritty run of Netflix shows continues this coming year. **Marvel's Iron Fist** arrives 17 March featuring Finn Jones, who plays Loras Tyrell in Game of Thrones, as Danny Rand, aka Iron Fist. Rand returns to New York after 15 years and is back to reclaim his family's company, but there's a new threat of course and Danny needs to choose between his family or his newfound duties as a super hero. Y'know, the usual super hero problems...

Iron Fist will eventually join **The Defenders**, the 'ground level' super hero ensemble featuring Daredevil, Jessica Jones and Luke Cage. Only eight episodes have been ordered by Netflix, but this could be a blessing in disguise as many have noted that, whilst Marvel's run of Netflix super hero shows has been strong, they dip in the middle. Giving The Defenders less episodes means the creators will have to keep the story arc tight plus Sigourney Weaver has been cast as the show's main villain. Win!

A different kind of 'super hero' TV comes courtesy of vigilante **The Punisher** as he gets his own flagship show in November, and Jon Bernthal returns to play the man himself. Bernthal made his first appearance in the second season of Daredevil and was arguably the highlight of the entire 13 episodes. With Marvel's Jim Chory and Jeph Loeb as executive producers, Marvel's The Punisher is in the right hands. We just can't wait to see what they do with the character.

Staying in the world of Marvel comics, but with a mind-twisting theme, comes **Legion**. Legion is a very powerful mutant in the comics and we only got a glimpse of this power in the first trailer. Although the show is set in the same universe as the X-Men movie franchise, there's an edgier, less vibrant feel, which suits the character well. David Haller, aka Legion, is the son of mutant Charles Xavier and actor Dan Stevens has said that Xavier will "probably" make an appearance at some point.

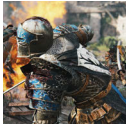
Neil Gaiman's **American Gods** isn't focussed on super heroes but rather mythical beings who live among us. Shadow Moon (Ricky Whittle) is granted an early release from prison after his wife Laura (Emily Browning) is killed in a car crash. Moon meets Wednesday (Ian McShane) who offers him a job, but Wednesday isn't the con man Moon first thinks he is, he turns out to be Norse God Odin. Shadow Moon treks across America looking for the old gods who are now living as normal people. Bryan Fuller is one of the creators and from the first trailer, it looks to be a fanatical affair.

Speaking of Mr Fuller, it looks like he'll have a busy year on his hands as he's spearheading **Star Trek: Discovery** alongside co-creator Alex Kurtzman. The series is the first Star Trek in over a decade since Star Trek: Enterprise concluded in 2005. The 13 episode season focusses on the USS Discovery and is set ten years before the events of Star Trek: The Original Series. Michelle Yeoh (Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon) has already been cast, as well as Doug Jones and Anthony Rapp. Rapp will play the series' first gay character and it feels like Fuller is creating a show that's diverse and all-inclusive, true to Gene Roddenberry's original vision. The reboot will be on screens in May.



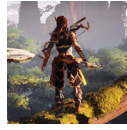


[NUMBER SEVENTEEN: 14 FEBRUARY]  
**FOR HONOR**  
 UBISOFT



The latest game to come out of Ubisoft's Montreal studio, For Honor does away with guns and instead has an 'Art of Battle' system for hand-to-hand combat in a variety of historical settings. Knights, samurai, Vikings and soliders get a turn.

[NUMBER SIXTEEN: 3 MARCH]  
**HORIZON ZERO DAWN**  
 SONY



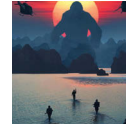
Aloy is a hunter and archer who winds up in a post apocalyptic land overrun by robots. With an open world environment plus ranged and melee weapons, this looks great fun. This PlayStation 4 exclusive from Guerrilla Games hits the UK in March.

[NUMBER FIFTEEN: 7 MARCH]  
**TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: WILDLANDS**  
 UBISOFT



The tenth Tom Clancy game is almost upon us, and along with every other game, the order of the day is going open world. It's a bit of a return to the game's roots, with no futuristic setting this time, but a massive environment set in Bolivia.

[NUMBER FOURTEEN: 10 MARCH]  
**KONG: SKULL ISLAND**  
 WARNER BROS

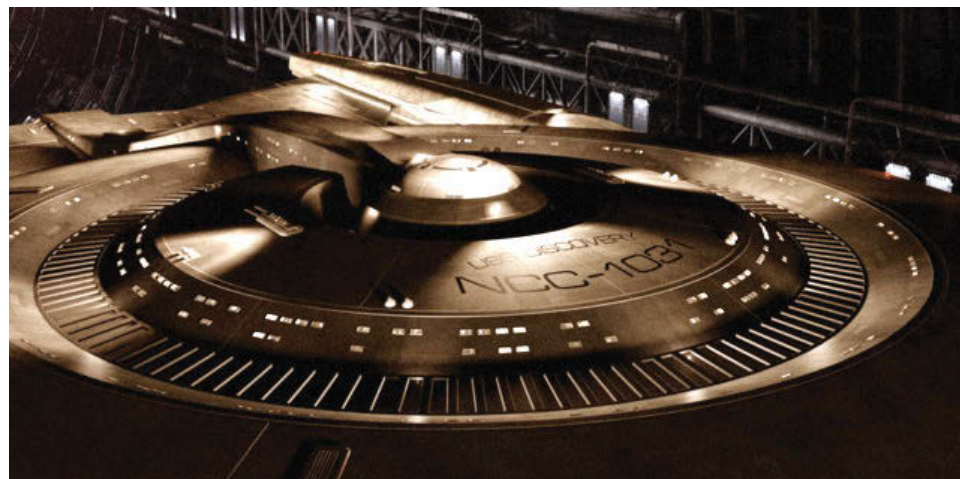


Warner Bros want to reboot the Kong franchise this year so they're throwing the big actor guns at Skull Island: Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L Jackson and John Goodman star. Set in the 1970s, a group of explorers venture deep into an island of monsters.

There will be much excitement for geeky TV lovers in the Summer with the seventh season of **Game of Thrones**. We already know there's likely to be some tension between Jon and Sansa in taking leadership of House Stark. While everyone thinks Bran is dead, Sansa is the rightful heir to Winterfell and associated titles, but after leading their bannermen to victory in battle Jon has just been declared King in the North "whose name is Stark" – despite not being a Stark and owing that victory to Sansa's actions behind the scenes. Arya will continue to work through her list, using the skills she learned from the Faceless Men and two childhood companions will meet again – we can't wait!



IRON FIST WILL EVENTUALLY JOIN THE DEFENDERS, THE 'GROUND LEVEL' SUPER HERO ENSEMBLE FEATURING DAREDEVIL, JESSICA JONES AND LUKE CAGE





[NUMBER THIRTEEN: 24 MARCH]

### POWER RANGERS

LIONSGATE



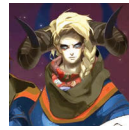
More rebooting of classics, this time it's those mighty morphin' Power Rangers turn in the first movie of their adventures since 1997's Turbo: A Power Rangers

Movie. Five troubled teens turn super hero when they learn their hometown is in danger.

[NUMBER TWELVE: DATE TBC]

### PYRE

SUPERGIANT GAMES



A party-based role playing game where you get to lead a band of exiles to freedom. That's something you don't see every day. The critics have already been raving about

the genre mash-up that Supergiant Games is working on, we have to say it looks the business!

[NUMBER ELEVEN: DATE TBC]

### STRANGER THINGS: SEASON 2

NETFLIX



The streaming TV giant announced in August that a second season of nine episodes had been ordered, coming sometime in 2017. Of course the first season was

pretty well self-contained, so it will be interesting to see where they take the show next.

[NUMBER TEN: 9 JUNE]

### THE MUMMY

LUCASFILM



Let's reboot the reboot as Universal Pictures attempt to get their famous Universal Monsters shared universe kickstarted. They're pulling out all the stops to make this

a success too with Tom Cruise headlining while an ancient mummy princess destroys London!

## GAMES HORROR AND FANTASY AROUND

There is an abundance of big name games and returning old favourites coming your way throughout the year, and with virtual reality added into the mix, 2017 will be a game changer. Among the major franchises making a return is the much anticipated **Resident Evil: Biohazard** on 24 January. The story is seen through the eyes of new protagonist Ethan Winters who is searching for his missing wife Mia, set four years after the events of the sixth game. Winters has fewer combat skills than previous Resident Evil protagonists, and despite having a variety of weapons, there will also be the usual puzzle solving and resource 'farming' as players navigate their way through the horror. Resident Evil: Biohazard will be playable on VR headsets from start to finish too, so make sure you have a pair of brown trousers.

If top quality horror games are your thing then you're going to go crazy over dystopian survival game **Days Gone**. As Deacon St. John, a drifter who prefers navigating through the wilderness as opposed to living in encampments, players face 'Freakers' (zombies, basically) and other challenges in this vast open world environment. No release date has been set yet but Days Gone is being developed exclusively for PS4.

**Scorn** is another game that slips into the horror category but adds visually stunning graphics and an ominous dreamlike atmosphere that stands it apart from other games in the genre. The first trailer doesn't give much away, it's mysterious, beguiling and creepy, set in what seems like a giant organism or creature. Scorn feels like the nightmare child of H.R. Giger and David Cronenberg and is one of the most compelling survival horrors to emerge for some time as the player must rely on unclear visual and audible clues to navigate around each interconnected region.

For more straightforward action, first person shooter **Prey** looks to have the horror of Alien: Isolation set in the not so distant future. As Morgan Yu the player must make their way through a spaceship littered with numerous hostile aliens, the action will reward you with powers and attributes you can gain over time. Prey is set in an alternative timeline, where John F. Kennedy survived the assassination attempt in 1963 and poured more funding into the space program.

If space is your thing, then look no further than **Mass Effect: Andromeda**, the fourth game in the Mass Effect franchise. Andromeda is set 600 years in the future in the Andromeda Galaxy, taking place from the point the events of Mass Effect 2 unfolded, setting it apart from the third game. In this massive open world setting your task is to colonise new worlds, exploring the galaxy in the starship Tempest.

Halo fans will also be happy to know that the sequel to 2009's Halo Wars, **Halo Wars 2**, arrives 21 February. It's set in the fictional Halo universe in the year 2559 and is exclusive to Microsoft Windows



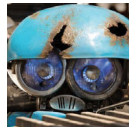


[NUMBER NINE: DATE TBC]  
**SCALEBOUND**  
MICROSOFT



One for Windows and Xbox One gamers only, PlatinumGames has created an incredible fantasy role-playing game where the main character Drew is accompanied everywhere by a dragon who assists in his adventures.

[NUMBER EIGHT: 23 JUNE]  
**TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST KNIGHT** PARAMOUNT PICTURES



Yeah! Michael Bay is back, and you know what that means?! Explosions, carnage, SFX set pieces – perfect popcorn flick fodder. This is Bay's fifth Transformers film, and his last, whether you think that's a good or bad thing will dictate how quickly you preorder tickets!

[NUMBER SEVEN: DATE TBC]  
**MR ROBOT: SEASON 3**  
USA NETWORK



We love Mr Robot here at Geeky Monkey – the best hacking drama on any screen, big or small. Rami Malek has deservedly won awards for his role as Elliot Alderson and we can't wait to see where it goes next. And if you think E Corp isn't Apple, then you're a fool!

[NUMBER SIX: 28 JULY]  
**THE DARK TOWER**  
COLUMBIA PICTURES



If you enjoyed Stephen King's The Dark Tower book series, then you're going to have this new movie adaptation at the top of your geek list. It's a sci-fi western horror starring Idris Elba where a kid named Jake Chambers discovers another dimension called Mid-World.

and Xbox One. The real time strategy game will be an exhilarating return and a real fan pleaser, set 28 years after Halo Wars and shortly before Halo 5: Guardians.

Staying sci-fi but coming back down to planet Earth, **Detroit: Become Human** is the latest game from Quantic Dream, the developers of Heavy Rain and Beyond: Two Souls. With that in mind, fans can expect multiple choice action from a third person viewpoint. Multiple characters are available and when they die, the story continues. The player determines the fate of the characters and the ending of the game. It's set in a time where androids exist in everyday life and Connor (Bryan Dechart), a police model android, is tasked with hunting down rogues.

There's plenty to look forward to for fantasy fans with **The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild** currently in development for WiiU. Nintendo is stretching the boundaries with their latest game in The Legend of Zelda series as Link can now climb, jump, run and walk around more freely than ever before in a massive open world environment, the ruined Kingdom of Hyrule. While the game is being developed for WiiU, it will also be released on the legendary company's new console... Switch.

Returning to some Earth-based action, Naughty Dog made a surprise announcement at the PlayStation Experience on 4 December declaring that **Uncharted: The Lost Legacy** would be their next game. Nathan Drake's story has come to an end, but there's clearly more adventures to come as new protagonist Chloe Frazer takes up the mantle, along with Nadine Ross.

If you like your games super hero based through, there's a bunch of great playing experiences coming your way. **Injustice 2** adds more DC super heroes and villains (including Firestorm and Poison Ivy) using the same mechanics as Injustice: Gods Among Us, including interaction with the environment. However, there's a new loot dropping system that allows players to add to their character's stats and customise their looks and abilities.

**Marvel Vs Capcom: Infinite** adds a bit of retro arcade-style fun. You can play as Iron Man, Street Fighter's Ryu and an array of Marvel and Capcom characters – an action-packed, vibrant, pick up and play fighting game that we can't wait to hit with our fighting stick.

Telltale Games also recently announced their new story game – **Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy – The Telltale Series**. With the popularity of the movie (and with Volume 2 out in 2017 as well), adding Star-Lord, Gamora, Drax, Rocket Raccoon and Groot to the mix is a no brainer. Players will have the chance to adventure around the galaxy with the ragtag crew of heroes, which will no doubt

include the same fun and humour that we've seen on the big screen. Wow, this one is going to be a megablast.

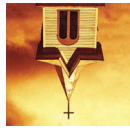
Finally, one that the Editor has chosen as his personal favourite, and a game that we will be enjoying in time for Christmas 2017 – Yu Suzuki's long-awaited sequel **Shenmue III**. The original Shenmue was a launch game for the SEGA Dreamcast in 1999 and set new standards in the detail put into an adventure game with players able to explore the open world environments, examine every nook and cranny, visit shops, take buses that ran on timetables, talk to a multitude of characters and take part in mini-games, including full simulations of Sega classics like Out Run. As a result it was also the most expensive game ever made at the time, reportedly costing \$70 million. While Shenmue has topped many greatest games of all time lists, it was not a commercial success, and played its part in the demise of Sega's console business. With a 16 year gap for Yu Suzuki to regroup, Shenmue III was finally announced as a Kickstarter project at the E3 show in 2015. If development goes according to plan, it will be released on PlayStation 4 and Windows in December.

## WITH VIRTUAL REALITY ADDED INTO THE MIX, 2017 WILL BE A GAME CHANGER.





[NUMBER FIVE: DATE TBC]  
**PREACHER: SEASON 2**  
 AMC



While The Walking Dead's star seems to be on the wane, we couldn't get enough of Preacher in 2016, so when AMC announced a second season of 13 episodes we praised the Lord! No dates yet, but there's plenty more story to come from the Vertigo comics.

[NUMBER FOUR: 4 SEPTEMBER]  
**MARVEL'S THE INHUMANS**  
 ABC



Coming in September is an eight episode live-action TV series from ABC with the first two episodes showing exclusively at IMAX cinemas (as they are putting up part of the cash). This is no spin-off though, it's its own series, centring on Black Bolt.

[NUMBER THREE: OCTOBER]  
**THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON 8**  
 AMC



After six seasons of blistering horror, with a human touch, The Walking Dead is getting a bit of a panning in season seven. Slow episodes focusing on single characters that no-one really cares about is dropping viewers like, well, like Walkers with a bolt through their head.

[NUMBER TWO: 27 OCTOBER]  
**SAW: LEGACY**  
 LIONSGATE FILMS



If you want to be really scared, then you'll need a return to the cinema, with the eighth instalment of the Saw franchise coming in time for Halloween. Saw 3D was meant to be the last one, but the writers felt that their big reveal needed more oomph.

## COMICS NEW BOOKS THAT WILL HAVE IMPACT

It would be difficult to imagine 2017 offering anything as big within the comic book landscape as last year's DC Rebirth, or Marvel's post Secret Wars reboot the previous year. In truth, the prospective lack of such continuity-shattering shuffling is a welcome one. It would be nice to continue to establish consistency, rather than tinker with it. With that in mind however, we're actually most excited about Marvel's upcoming attempt to relaunch their X-Books, under the banner of **ResurreXion**.

It's no secret that their mutant slate has fallen on hard times in recent years as they've continually overexposed trendy characters such as Deadpool, and made horrendously unwise decisions in their handling of iconic 'muties' such as Wolverine and Jean Grey. But the mutant mythos still command huge popularity and a desire amongst many fans to return to form. Two new team books, **X-Men: Blue** and **X-Men: Gold**, will hark back to one of the most successful periods in Mutant history, the early Nineties. With Chris Claremont's ground-breaking run, and record setting collaborations with artists such as Jim Lee, Uncanny X-Men became a title so bloated that it warranted a second monthly book to facilitate the enormously popular ensemble cast. Thus, the Blue and Gold teams were born, and depicted by a string of the hottest artists in the industry. It remains to be seen whether they can recapture the magic, or if this will be another feeble stuttering effort in the vein of the current Uncanny and Extraordinary X-Men titles, but with Marc Guggenheim and Cullen Bunn at the helm, it should be a fascinating ride. On the periphery of those titles will be numerous accompanying series. **Generation X** in particular, boasts a high pedigree and should be one to watch for.

Marvel's commitment to churning out Star Wars tie-ins isn't faltering either, nor is Cullen Bunn's work schedule. Their **Darth Maul** limited series should prove to be one of the most talked about of all their character-specific enterprises. Drawn by Luke Ross, it will be especially noteworthy given that Marvel has revealed it will take place prior to the popular figure's cinematic debut and will thus play as something of an origin story.

DC is combining with Boom! Studios in order to dish out the somewhat unlikely combination that is **Green Lantern/Planet of the Apes**. Running for six issues, this limited series follows on in February from the wacky 2015 DC/IDW effort, Star Trek/Green Lantern: The Spectrum War. Our primate friends recently encountered Tarzan in a Dark Horse collaboration, so while the risk of overkill is certainly present, the high standard of the aforementioned books has us



excited for this one. DC will also likely put a huge focus on their upcoming **Batwoman**. This one will be landing in February too, and should definitely be a big one to get on board with immediately.

Hot on the heels of his excellent creator-owned series The Beauty, Jeremy Haun has started work on **Realm** for Image Comics. It looks like Haun will unleash something a little more fantastical than his social commentary-tinged thriller, in the shape of this book, tentatively scheduled for the summer. Prior to that, Greg Rucka's latest enterprise for the publisher will land at the end of February. Titled **The Old Guard**, Rucka's horror-tinged epic brings him together with artist Leandro Fernandez and concerns soldiers who have battled and died through numerous eras and climates.

Finally, if you're considering something a little different, **Riverdale** is likely to be a colossal hit for Archie Comics. While the publisher has enjoyed a big renaissance in recent years (their Sabrina and Afterlife with Archie horror endeavours especially have been superb), the TV series of the same name on The CW ensures this one will be a huge seller, potentially with legs on the back issue market. Written by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, it's a unique opportunity for readers to hop onto a new comic and television bandwagon simultaneously.

You're going to need an extra shelf!



[NUMBER ONE: DECEMBER]

## RED DEAD REDEMPTION 2

ROCKSTAR GAMES



We had wondered what Rockstar were up to, with nothing new from any of their studios for a long time. Then they announce another sequel to one of our favourite games.

Red Dead Redemption 2 will hit PS4 and Xbox One at the end of the year, with fans petitioning for a Windows version.

## TECH COULD 2017 BE THE YEAR TO SWITCH?

Following the muted success of the WiiU, there has been a real fear that Nintendo would go the way of SEGA after the Dreamcast and become a software-only company. No such worries have materialised, and the fanboys were sent into a frenzy by the initial imagery of the **Nintendo Switch**. Pioneering as ever, Nintendo's seventh major home console will be something of a hybrid, transforming into a tablet to enable you to continue your game on the move. An intriguing prospect, further details are expected in early January ahead of a March release, and we've gone more in-depth in Tech Know on page 84.

Staying with gaming, with the enhanced PS4 Pro proving a massive kick in the teeth to those who had just bought a normal one, Microsoft is set to follow suit with a revamped version of its Xbox One console in time for next Christmas. **Project Scorpio** claims to be the most powerful console ever, offering a massive six teraflops of power, whatever they are. Virtual Reality is again a driving force behind the overhaul, and it will also offer true 4K gaming and backwards compatibility with your Xbox One games and accessories, allegedly.

Is it a drone? Is it a plane? No. It is of course an Autonomous Aerial Vehicle called the **EHang 184** that is testing now for a launch in 2017. It's a mildly terrifying glimpse into a near future where we all jump into a one-man drone, tap in the coordinates and fly to our destination



NINTENDO SWITCH

unscathed. Assuming we have around a quarter of a million pounds to spare, that is. With four twin propellers, safety is paramount, and the EHang 184 can cruise at up to 500m with an average speed of 100kmh. Clearly a legal minefield, don't expect to see the skies full of them any time soon, but with a 23-minute maximum journey time it could be useful for a rural commute. Just don't forget to charge the battery!

2017 will see big things from Apple with new iMacs, iPads and a new direction for the **iPhone 8**. Almost ten years after the initial appearance of Apple's groundbreaking blower, it lurches towards double figures while people continue to mutter about battery life. So what will number eight be remembered for before it is consigned to landfill as an embarrassing relic? It's still the best part of a year away, but current rumours include an all-glass design, wireless charging, and for those with deep pockets (in both senses) a sizeable 5.8 inch screen. Nothing is confirmed as yet, although September seems likely, and you probably won't need to untangle a pair of headphones. **GM**

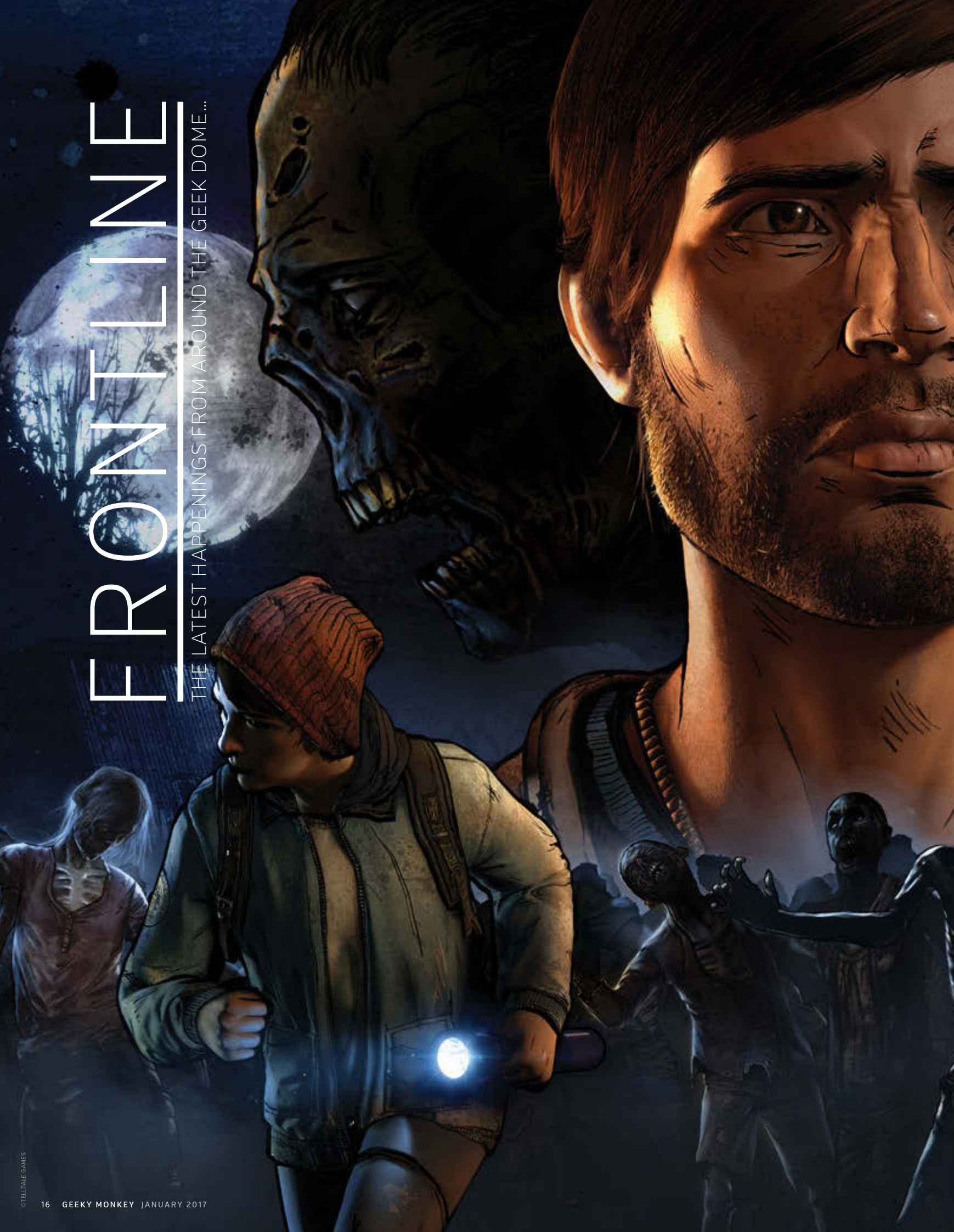


EHANG 184



# FRONTLINE

THE LATEST HAPPENINGS FROM AROUND THE GEEK DOME...





## HIGHLIGHTS

// **THE WALKING DEAD: THE TELLTALE SERIES - A NEW FRONTIER** AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW IS A TWO PART EPISODE PREMIERE OF TELLTALE'S LATEST WALKING DEAD INSTALMENT. IT INTRODUCES NEW CHARACTER, JAVIER, AND SHOWS HOW THE ZOMBIE PLAGUE AFFECTED HIM AND HIS FAMILY BEFORE THE STORY FAST FORWARDS AND WE MEET A VERY FAMILIAR FACE.

// **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY: THE TELLTALE SERIES** WHILE WE'RE ON TELLTALE GAMES, THE PROLIFIC GAME DEVELOPER HAS JUST ANNOUNCED A FIVE PART EPISODIC GAME OF GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY FOR 2017, COMING TO CONSOLES, PC AND MOBILE. NOT MUCH IS KNOWN RIGHT NOW, BUT THERE'S A TRAILER ON YOUTUBE.

// **LEGION** FOX UK HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THEIR NEW ADAPTATION OF THE MARVEL COMIC WILL HIT UK SCREENS ON 9 FEBRUARY AT 9PM. STARRING DAN STEVENS OF DOWNTOWN ABBEY AND BEAUTY AND THE BEAST FAME, THIS IS THE FIRST TV SHOW TO SPIN-OFF THE X-MEN MOVIE SERIES.

// **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON** MAX LANDIS, SON OF JOHN WHO DIRECTED THE ORIGINAL MOVIE, IS TO WRITE AND DIRECT A REMAKE OF HIS DAD'S CLASSIC 1981 HORROR. THE PROJECT ALSO HAS ROBERT KIRKMAN, HE OF THE WALKING DEAD FAME, ATTACHED, SO HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE AN AWESOME RETURN TO THE MOORS.

// **THE WALKING DEAD** TALKING OF TWD, THE SHOW HAS GIVEN FOX UK ITS HIGHEST EVER AUDIENCE WITH 1.43 MILLION VIEWERS FOR THE SEASON SEVEN PREMIERE. SADLY, IF INTERNET GOSSIP IS TO BE BELIEVED, EACH EPISODE SINCE HAS SEEN THAT NUMBER PLUMMET.





## NEWS BITES

### A WHOLE NEW WORLD

The final digital expansion pack for EA's Star Wars Battlefront has landed. Coinciding with Rogue One hitting cinemas, this new content update brings the planet of Scarif from the movie into play. There are four new maps to explore, a A180 and DT-29 blaster pistol to use, plus of course characters from the spin-off Star Wars movie, Jyn Erso and Orson Krennic, to play. It doesn't end there though, there's a multi-stage game mode called Infiltration with new space and ground battles to enjoy, plus if you're lucky enough to have PlayStation VR there's an exclusive Rogue One: X-wing VR Mission for you that just has to be experienced to be believed! Well that lot should breathe a bit more life into Battlefront for you, while EA get busy on an entirely new game in time for Episode VIII.



### SUPER MARIO LAND

Universal Studios and Nintendo are cooking up something cool between them. Over the next few years the Universal parks in Japan, Orlando and Hollywood will be opening themed Nintendo worlds! Nintendo's legendary game designer and father of Mario, Shigeru Miyamoto (seen above on a fact finding trip), is working alongside Universal Creative on every detail. Excited about the prospect he commented, "We're really bringing the world to life, I think Mario will feel like he finally came home! It's going to be fun!"



## GET OFF YOUR SWEDE WITH WORLD OF TANKS

Sweden may be better known for infuriating furniture, rubbery meatballs and the chef from The Muppets, but it was also once home to a burgeoning tank industry. They haven't been involved in a major conflict for 200 years, but despite their defiantly neutral status some of the country's greatest military minds spent much of The Cold War designing and building an array of classic and futuristic armoured fighting vehicles, allegedly to guard against any domestic insurrection as well as to provide international defence. Around 400 vehicles were designed, and the pick of that hardware is now available in World Of Tanks, the phenomenally successful free-to-play online PC and console title. Sweden becomes the ninth nation to feature in the game, with the tech tree opening up to offer some 20 diverse and often pioneering vehicles. In the early stages, the tanks are based on actual existing vehicles, diligently measured and photographed, and in some cases replicated using infinitely quicker yet prohibitively expensive 3D scanning. As the tech tree opens up, the game designers have had to use their imagination, recreating tanks from little more than wooden frameworks or even a solitary design document. Expect a full report next issue.

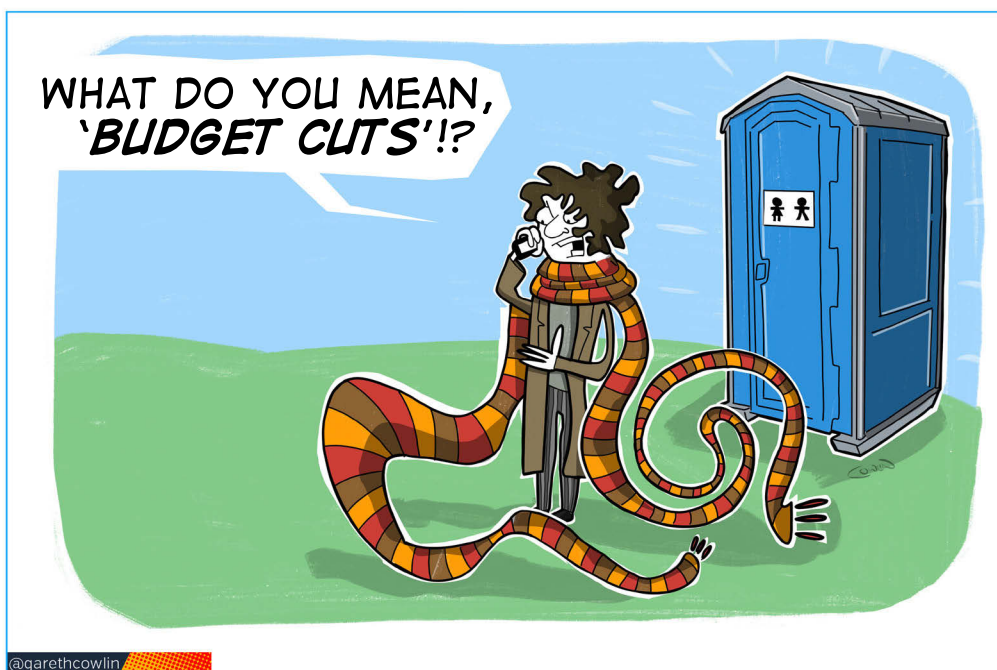
## CLASSIC QUOTE

**"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!"**

THE WIZARD OF OZ HAS BEEN FOUND OUT

## THE GEEKY SIDE

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'BUDGET CUTS'!?



@garethcowlin



# MAP OF GEEK

IF YOU HAVE A BEACH OR A CASTLE IN YOUR STORY THEN THERE'S ONE PLACE THAT CAN PROVIDE THEM BOTH. WITH DOCTOR WHO FILMING EXTENSIVELY IN THE AREA, WE VISIT... EAST SUSSEX.

// EAST SUSSEX

East Sussex as a county and Brighton in particular are mostly associated with thrillers and dramas, especially for TV. It's even been part of two Carry On films! However, dedicated geeks can seek out a handful of key locations for a variety of films over the years, as well as recognising Brighton's general geeky vibe for decades now.

Classic 1961 Gothic spookfest *The Innocents* was filmed at Sheffield Park and Gardens five miles from Uckfield. The location doubled for Bly House, where Deborah Kerr's governess goes to work with the possibly possessed children. Rewind six years and Bodiam Castle near Robertsbridge stands in during the Richard Greene *Adventures of Robin Hood* series, while fast-forward to 1975 and the Pythons use it as Swamp Castle in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. The Eighties would see it feature on ITV in *Robin of Sherwood* where it became the exteriors of Huntingdon Castle.

East Sussex would turn up a few times over that decade on BBC in *Doctor Who*, often in season finales. During the Fifth Doctor's two-parter *The King's Demons* (and Season 20 finale), the aforementioned Bodiam would be used once more for funnily enough the same

time period as most Robin Hood stories, the 13th century reign of King John. In the Sixth Doctor's second and final season, *The Trial of a Time Lord*, the Beeb made use of Telscombe Cliffs at Peacehaven during *Mindwarp*, and filmed *The Ultimate Foe* at Camber Sands and Rye Harbour Nature Reserve at Rye.

1991 saw the next famous screen version of Robin Hood, Kevin Costner's *Prince of Thieves*, land back in England from the Crusades at the famous Seven Sisters chalk cliffs, currently accessible either through the National Trust's Birling Gap locale or East Sussex County Council's Seven Sisters Country Park. Regular readers of this column will be aware that this film clearly attempted to cram in as much of Britain as possible into its location work; anyone trying to visit all of its locations had better have a railcard or good car insurance!

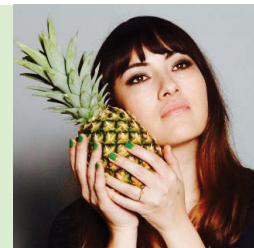
Art-house sci-fi screen adaptation *Never Let Me Go* also travelled to all points of the compass in 2010, but finished up in the county on De La Warr Parade in Bexhill-on-Sea, unlike *Children of Men*, which doubled Bexhill elsewhere. Finally, *Kingsman: The Secret Service* made use of the Sharpthorne Tunnel on the famous Bluebell Railway for one of its tense training sequences. **GM**





# Jabber Talky

OUR GEEK IN RESIDENCE, CLAIRE LIM, TAKES ON A BURNING SUBJECT FROM THE GEEKIVERSE EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH SHE SCREAMS...  
**"PLEASE, NO MORE FILMS BASED ON VIDEOGAMES"**



WITH RESIDENT GEEK, CLAIRE LIM

@WEECLAIRE

**M**y earliest memories of videogames go all the way back to solving the mysteries of Marinor in The Adventures of Maddog Williams in the Dungeons of Duridian on the Atari ST, to hours spent amassing riches in Transport Tycoon, exploring space in Mass Effect and roaming the wastelands of Fallout.

I remember my videogame obsessions with great fondness – there's nothing more enjoyable than getting lost in a game, escaping the mundane realities of everyday life, a similar feeling we get when watching a film, so surely it makes sense to combine the two worlds, right? Well, not always.

For over two decades now studios have been making videogame adaptations for the big screen with varying levels of success. In 1993, Super Mario Bros got the big screen treatment and the result was a film that crashed... hard. Directed by husband and wife duo Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel, Bob Hoskins was cast as Mario with John Leguizamo alongside him as his brother Luigi. The film focussed on a parallel world ruled by President Koopa (Dennis Hopkins) as he attempted to merge Earth and his world, ruling both. This film resembled nothing of the original Nintendo game, with the Goombas (essentially sentient mushrooms) appearing as hulking devolved foot soldier dinosaurs. I could go on, there was a lot wrong with this film and although it has since become a cult classic, there's really very little of value here, even Hopper noted that this was "the worst thing" he ever did, describing the experience as a "nightmare."

Then there's Street Fighter (1994), with Jean Claude Van Damme cast as Colonel Guile and Kylie in the role as Cammy. The film was based very loosely on Street Fighter II and produced by Capcom, the whole thing was a mess and was barely worth of straight to DVD status.

Perhaps it's unfair to look at these early videogame adaptions though – films these days look a million times better. Games, too, have become more sophisticated and film studios have continued to try to emulate the success of various game franchises. Based on the hugely popular horror franchise of the same name,

Silent Hill (2006) was praised for it's look and atmosphere but fell short when it came to the script and poor delivery. Prince of Persia: Sands of Time (2010) was instantly forgettable, although it was a box office hit, and the recent Duncan Jones directed Warcraft movie is one of the highest grossing videogame adaptations but it was a critical failure as the movie struggled to squeeze out a worthwhile plot from the World of Warcraft game.

Taking the basic elements of a game, whether it be Resident Evil, Doom, Hitman, or the aforementioned movies here, and adapting them as movies are exercises in gluttony – studios trying to squeeze every last penny they

can from videogame fans. I don't know a single person who counts any videogame movie on their top ten list of favourites. There's a difference to being immersed in a game for days or weeks (or even months!) on end, solving the mysteries of that world or feeling like you've become the best soldier or the slickest spy. This time spent in that 'world' is what makes the game, plus it's a very personal experience as every gamer plays a different way.

Films and games are two different mediums, two great mediums, and should be respected in their own right. You just can't get the same level of obsession from a videogame adapted film than you can by playing it. **CL**

I REMEMBER MY VIDEOGAME OBSESSIONS WITH GREAT FONDNESS – THERE'S NOTHING MORE ENJOYABLE THAN GETTING LOST IN A GAME





*A tale of emotion  
versus reason*

# Tales of Berseria™



**27<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

*talesofgame.com*



**PS4 PC DIGITAL**

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# Lucy Lawless

GEEKY ACTRESS: FROM XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS TO ASH VS EVIL DEAD

Born in New Zealand, Lucy Lawless has carved out a career that has cemented her as the Queen of geeky TV. Her breakout role was as Xena: Warrior Princess between 1995 and 2001, but she will be well known to Geeky Monkeys as Number Three in *Battlestar Galactica*, Lucretia in *Spartacus: Blood and Sand* and its sequels, and she has popped up in the fifth and sixth seasons of NBC's *Parks and Recreation*. There was also a short stint in Marvel's *Agents of SHIELD*. We caught up with this iconic geeky TV actress as she was chatting about the new season of *Ash Vs Evil Dead* where she plays Ruby Knowby, a character on a quest to hunt down the source of the evil outbreaks.

**I think a lot of people probably don't realise that before you were Xena, before you were in the roles that many people are familiar with you for, you were doing musicals all the way back to your childhood. You then started out on TV in sketch comedy, so obviously you were experimenting with a lot of different things. What kind of career did you envision for yourself in the early days?**

I saw English theatre. That was the dream, and then I found myself in action TV, it was nothing I ever saw coming but I'm pretty grateful. It's given me a really rather wonderful life... probably more wonderful than English theatre would have afforded me, so mustn't grumble as we say in the field.

**So you saw yourself as a more classical, dramatic actor?**

I thought I'd be doing Shakespeare and *Lady Macbeth*. The closest I've come is *Lucretia in Spartacus*, and that was a really awesome, terrifying, challenging experience, so I'm really happy I got a chance to do that.

**Is Xena still the role that you mostly get recognised for more than anything else?**

Yes. Especially around the world. In America it's much more mixed. I'm much more recognised for *Spartacus*, or whatever, but always underneath it all, it's underpinned by Xena recognition... but around the world, Xena.

**Right now I feel like we have this movement in both sports and entertainment where women are taking the lead and being celebrated for it, whether it's Ronda Rousey in mixed martial arts, or the growing number of female leads in action movies and TV shows. In that regard, was Xena ahead of its time?**

No, I think it was... fortuitous timing. It was just the dawning of the internet, when we still had unsyndicated television and very limited

**I USED TO BE SO BEWILDERED, HOW COME JENNIFER ANISTON'S ALL OVER EVERY MAGAZINE, ALL THESE PHOTO SHOOTS?**

cable. It was syndicated, but there wasn't the proliferation of channels and ways that you can devour television these days. You were much more limited, you can have so much more cut through if you were put on at 9pm on WPIX in New York for six years straight as we were, you make a massive impression. It's that Andy Warhol grapefruit thing, it's about how many times you keep slugging people over the head with the same image, you can really brand it in people's brains. I think it's very hard these days to have that kind of cut through. Some people let you have it. Some people. Some shows.

**Being in an action show like that, it's interesting you say how that was a direction you didn't anticipate. It seems like there were times where you were pumping out a lot of episodes. What was the shooting schedule like, and how crazy was it?**

Well, on Xena it would be 60 to 70 hours a week, every week for nine months. We'd have breaks here and there, but it would take nine months for us to do 22. The first season was 24 episodes, and 22 then after, and I used to be so bewildered, how come Jennifer Aniston's all over every magazine, all these photo shoots? It's because they only shoot two days a week, and we slogged it out. Super physical, and it was all day, everyday on set, and there was no time for anything else, really.

**Was there a lot of training for the physical aspect of the shows and stunt work?**

Oh, yeah, because I sucked. First couple of years, I was black and blue the whole time. Then you just get popped in the face a few times, and you get fast, you get good. It's the only way to end the pain. You have to get good at a thing, do it right the first time.

**I was going to ask if it's something you grew to enjoy, because it seems like you could only really...**

Never! Never!

**Oh, never?**

Everyone was like... when we did *Spartacus*, and I'm the naked lady upstairs, and people would say, "Oh, do you really miss the fighting?", and I'd stand on that balcony, and just go, "You poor slob. You're just slogging it out in the dust, in the filth, and I'm sitting up here eating Turkish Delight, and loving it."

**I don't think that many people realise that you started your TV career in sketch comedy, so they were surprised how well you fitted in as a recurring character on Parks and Recreation. Considering your background, was leaping back into comedy a challenging adjustment?**

Oh, yeah! American comedy, even though I love it, especially *Parks and Rec*, it's my all-time favourite – but it's so foreign to me. I still just don't really know how to do it. I'm really more of an observer, but that kind of sketch comedy we were doing was pretty primitive stuff.

I would sure love to be able to nail that one time in my life, but I'm so busy having a good time... whatever project I'm doing is my new favourite thing. I'm like the goldfish going around the bowl going, "Oh my God, look at that beautiful rock. Oh, there's a castle. Oh my God, look at that beautiful rock, oh look at that castle – I can't believe it!" That's how this important









## I STAYED IN GOOD TOUCH WITH MING NA FROM AGENTS OF SHIELD, THOUGH. SHE'S ONE OF THE EXCELLENT WOMEN IN HOLLYWOOD.

Oh, that's an interesting idea. Oh, I never even thought of that... that great Manwich of a man. That's an incredible compliment, thank you so much. I never saw it that way. I felt quite over-awed by the whole experience, because I just worship them. All of them, they're really good people.

**You also created a lot of buzz ahead of your arrival on Marvel's Agents of SHIELD, even more so when your character was killed off during your very first episode.**

That was cool. It was a little thing for my Comic-Con fans. I knew that they would love that, and it was just a real, "I'm in LA for a week, this has come up, why the hell not?"... it was one of those situations. I certainly didn't intend to deceive anybody, but it just played out as a bit of a trick, didn't it?

I stayed in good touch with Ming Na from Agents of SHIELD, though. She's one of the excellent women in Hollywood. I kind of collect them. She's a good one. First class woman.

**A lot of people also probably don't realise that you've had a full-fledged music career over the years. Performing on Broadway... Not full-fledged. I just do it because it's an**

brain works. Everything I'm doing is my new favourite thing!

**When you did start appearing on Parks and Recreation, was it intimidating?**

You're screwed in comedy if you're not relaxed, and you just admire them so much, and they're so bloody good, and they're so kind. It's hard to walk into that when you're coming off of Spartacus, you know what I mean? It was just a completely different animal.

**Was it daunting to walk into a role as a counterpoint to Nick Offerman's character of Ron Swanson, the most stubbornly old-fashioned man alive, knowing that you had to be his equal?**

extension of being a performer, as you've said before, and sometimes it's part of acting, isn't it? To me, it's about eating life, and doing things that are scary. That's kind of what it's been about, really.

I get together with Joe LoDuca. Joe LoDuca was the composer on Evil Dead, all the original Evil Deads, and on Xena and Hercules, and every show we've ever done, basically, and currently on Ash Vs Evil Dead. He and I love to put together little shows in interesting parts of the world, so we're trying to get something going in Europe at the moment. We're talking about it. It's the most fun thing you can do... putting on a music show for fans.

**Is music something that you'd want to incorporate again in your TV roles?**

Evidently not. I don't even think like that, really. A role comes to you, and it's its own world, it has its own rules, and you can't start bending it because something is titillating to you. You just have to stay in that world, so the day they do Agents of SHIELD: The Musical, it's over (laughs).

**You know what, they did a sequence on Marvel's Agent Carter that was a musical, so you never know.**

How long did that last?

**Well, that ended up being the final season.**

There you go!

**Let's talk about Ash Vs Evil Dead. Were you a fan of the movies before you began this journey as part of the TV show?**

I was disgusted by the first Evil Dead. I saw it on a video when I was 17, or maybe 16, and I went off on a huge fit. I was so disgusted by the tree rape scene, and I thought everybody who made it should be in jail. It wasn't until I met Rob [Tapert – Lucy's husband and Executive Producer of Ash Vs Evil Dead] that I actually went and saw Evil Dead 2 and Army of Darkness.

Evil Dead 2 is my all time favourite. I love that our show is doing much in that style, but that could change and become a little more Army of Darkness as we go along. It'll just keep evolving. Still within the Evil Dead world.

**From an outsider's perspective, you watch a show like this, and you think to yourself, "My God, this has to be the most fun thing to make ever." What's the vibe like on set for you? Is everyone really enjoying creating it?**

It's such a crushing schedule, and the demands of this season's episodes were so huge. Dana DeLorenzo just cracks me up, but the time I really laugh is when I'm standing, watching the monitor when a stunt comes off brilliantly. I like to see Bruce being tortured. When he's





acting as if he's being consumed by something, I laugh. I howl with laughter at the monitor, but other than that, it's pretty serious work.

Serious is the wrong word, but we are cranking it. It's all hands on deck, all the time, and nobody fools around. You think it would be more fun, but the result is fun, and you have to work really hard to give the fans that result.

**When you compare this show to other shows that you've been a part of, do you feel a sense of freedom from censorship and other restrictions that you've dealt with on network television shows?**

Well, that's a Starz thing. I'm going to give the nod to Starz there because on Spartacus it was very hard to find the line which we could not cross. We had to think, "How far can we push this?" and we had one of our producers manage to find the line, the one place that would make Starz go, "Eek!" It was beyond the pale, it was honestly beyond the pale. Otherwise, Starz is incredibly courageous, and open-minded.

**Is there any kind of craziness, or scenes, or anything that we can expect to see in the upcoming season of Ash Vs The Evil Dead you can tell us about?**

Ed, played by the estimable Lee Majors. His character, Ash's dad, has a bit of a thing for Ruby, and he reveals a weird little fetish, so keep watching out. It's kind of hilarious. He and Ash compete for women, and it's just obscene, and horrible, and hilarious.

Ray Santiago bites the big one this season. He worked harder than anybody else. Whatever ghastly ideas the writers can come up with, somehow Ray gets the worst, and he... grace is not the right word, but forbearance... because he really buys it this season.

**You've been a part of the sci-fi and fantasy genres of TV and films for long enough to see the entire culture of that fan base change. How has the experience of attending fan conventions and interacting with the masses changed for you over the years?**

I LIKE TO SEE BRUCE BEING TORTURED. WHEN HE'S ACTING AS IF HE'S BEING CONSUMED BY SOMETHING, I LAUGH. I HOWL WITH LAUGHTER AT THE MONITOR,

There's a lot more women. It's much more 50-50 in gaming and cosplay than it used to be. It's much more popular for all kinds of people. I guess the geeks are running the show, now. They're running the world.

**It's like we always planned. We've been working towards this!**

Yeah (laughs). For me personally, I have far more male fans than I used to have.

**Along those same lines, I just wanted to ask you about social media, which wasn't a factor during Xena's heyday...**

Well, we didn't have social media, but the fans that we had then were incredibly internet-literate. They were the first, and they were really hooked up.

**That being said, do you embrace the evolution into constant social media conversation? Is that something you get involved in?**

Yeah, I'm a bit lazy about it... it's only if I've got nothing else to do. I try to have flesh buddies, and not virtual friends, but when I'm doing this publicity thing, it's much easier to stay in touch. I tend not to have conversations about shows I'm working on, because they're not real to me. They're realer to the fans who see them as a finished product, and to me, it's just a physical experience I have with my friends. I do stay in touch with the fans. I try to, anyway. That's why I go to conventions, that's where you really meet the fans.

**You've done music, you've done comedy, you've done drama, you've done action. What do you want to do next?**

I want to keep making groundbreaking television, or play in groundbreaking roles.



There's a reason that I'm only on networks for short periods of time. I'm made for pretty stern stuff, and that's what interests me is pushing the envelope as far as you can, and if I thought I knew where I, or my character, or my work was going to be in five years time, I'd probably kill myself.

**Wow, there's a headline for you.**

(laughs) Yeah, life's an adventure. Nothing else scares me worse than being locked into something rigid. **GM**

**Lucy Lawless was talking to Gerry Strauss. She can be seen now in Ash Vs Evil Dead on Virgin Media or download episodes on Amazon and Google Play.**





## THE GOONIES

// 1985

*directed by*

RICHARD DONNER

*featuring*

SEAN ASTIN // **MICHAEL 'MIKEY' WALSH**  
COREY FELDMAN // **CLARK 'MOUTH' DEVEREAUX**  
JEFF COHEN // **LAWRENCE 'CHUNK' COHEN**

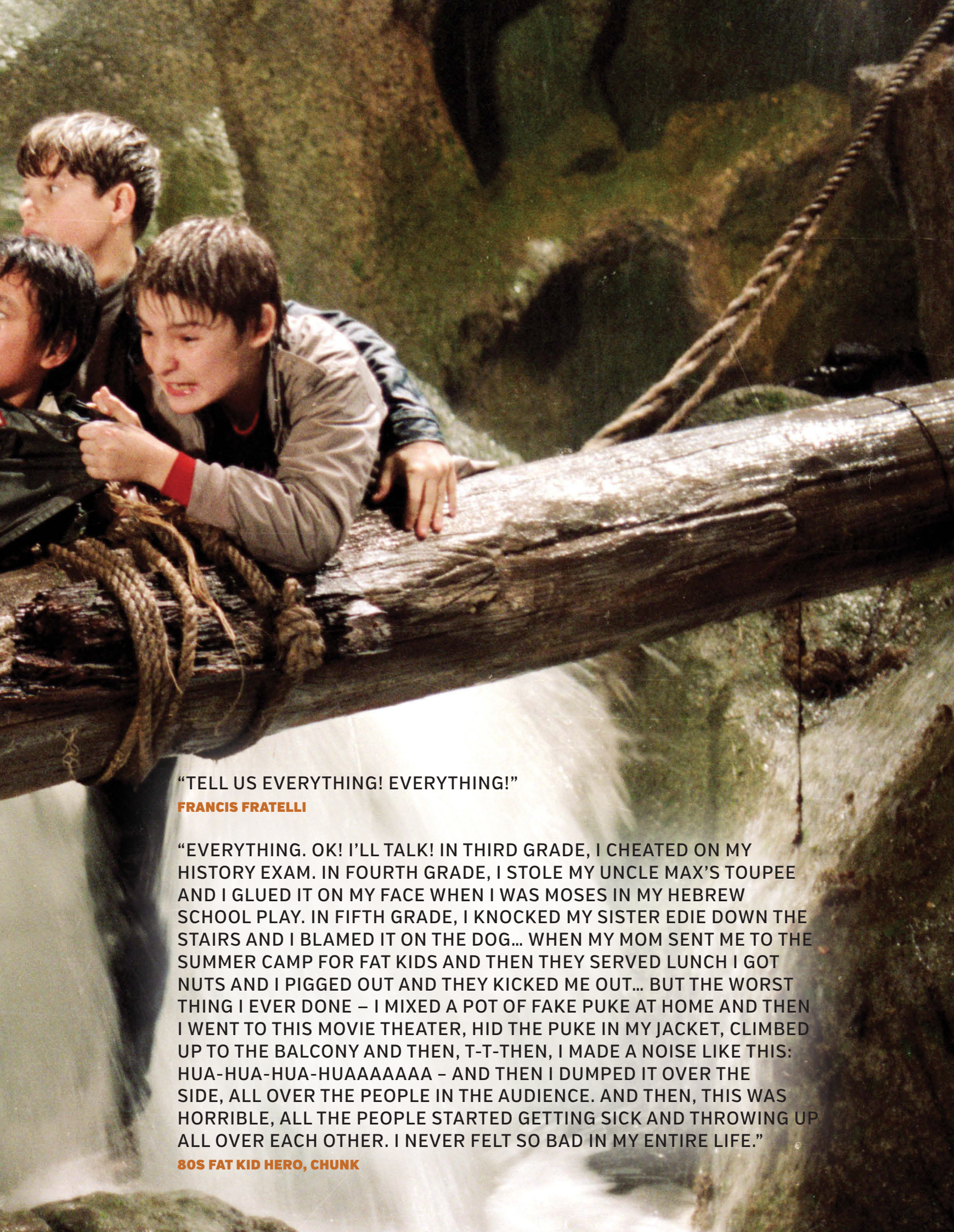
The set up behind 1985's *The Goonies* reads like a who's who in Hollywood. Steven Spielberg came up with the original story, the screenplay was written by Chris Columbus who had just finished writing *Gremlins* and went on to direct the *Harry Potter* movies. Richard Donner directs, the man behind the first modern day super hero movie, *Superman* in 1978. Then there were the child stars. Jonathan Ke Huy Quan had just been in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* and Corey Feldman was already an established child actor, having starred in *Gremlins* and *Friday the 13th*. He went on to become an Eighties icon, appearing in *Stand By Me* and *The Lost Boys*.

It's one of those movies that has gone down in geek legend, the story of a bunch of kids calling themselves *The Goonies* whose homes are facing foreclosure so that a country club can expand. They stumble upon a treasure map belonging to legendary pirate One-Eyed Willy. This leads them on an adventure with caves, pirate ships, a family of criminals and a deformed man called Sloth. Needless to say after much danger and mayhem, they save their homes with gems they have salvaged.

Its success is down to the fact that kids could identify with *The Goonies*. Even the fat kids had a hero on screen, Chunk with his Truffle Shuffle (you have to see the movie to understand). With video releases on VHS and Betamax, games and a merchandising bandwagon that is still trundling along today, *The Goonies* has earned over \$62 million to date.







**"TELL US EVERYTHING! EVERYTHING!"**

**FRANCIS FRATELLI**

"EVERYTHING. OK! I'LL TALK! IN THIRD GRADE, I CHEATED ON MY HISTORY EXAM. IN FOURTH GRADE, I STOLE MY UNCLE MAX'S TOUPEE AND I GLUED IT ON MY FACE WHEN I WAS MOSES IN MY HEBREW SCHOOL PLAY. IN FIFTH GRADE, I KNOCKED MY SISTER EDIE DOWN THE STAIRS AND I BLAMED IT ON THE DOG... WHEN MY MOM SENT ME TO THE SUMMER CAMP FOR FAT KIDS AND THEN THEY SERVED LUNCH I GOT NUTS AND I PIGGED OUT AND THEY KICKED ME OUT... BUT THE WORST THING I EVER DONE – I MIXED A POT OF FAKE PUKE AT HOME AND THEN I WENT TO THIS MOVIE THEATER, HID THE PUKE IN MY JACKET, CLIMBED UP TO THE BALCONY AND THEN, T-T-THEN, I MADE A NOISE LIKE THIS: HUA-HUA-HUA-HUAAAAAAA – AND THEN I DUMPED IT OVER THE SIDE, ALL OVER THE PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE. AND THEN, THIS WAS HORRIBLE, ALL THE PEOPLE STARTED GETTING SICK AND THROWING UP ALL OVER EACH OTHER. I NEVER FELT SO BAD IN MY ENTIRE LIFE."

**80S FAT KID HERO, CHUNK**



# ROGUE ONE

## BEHIND THE SCENES

FROM THE MALDIVES TO ICELAND, FROM PINEWOOD STUDIOS TO CANARY WHARF UNDERGROUND STATION – ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY MAY BE SET IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY, BUT THE LOCATIONS ARE MORE DOWN TO EARTH. HERE'S A PICTORIAL BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT THE LATEST STAR WARS MOVIE...

### COMING OUT OF HIS SHELL

A rare sight of actor Alan Tudyk standing next to the character he voices, new droid K-2SO. Much to Anthony Daniels' dismay, K-2SO is completely CGI, unlike the hot and uncomfortable suit Daniels wore as C-3PO.



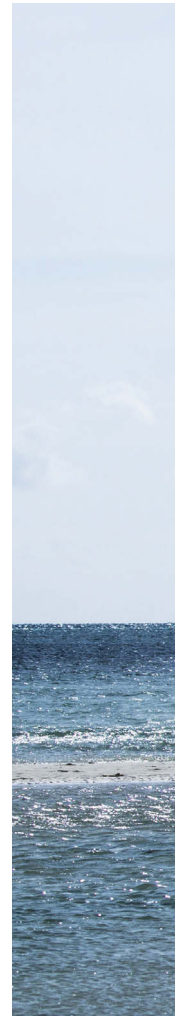
### GETTING YOUR HANDS DIRTY

Director Gareth Edwards was very hands on in the making of Rogue One. Here we see him wearing the full camera rig as Felicity Jones perfects her Princess Leia pout.



### “YOU SHIT”

ANTHONY DANIELS COMMENT TO ALAN TUDYK ON LEARNING THAT NEW STAR WARS DROID K-2SO WAS TO BE COMPLETELY CGI, UNLIKE HIS OWN C-3PO.





**“I LOVE MONKEYS AND I LOVE SPACE. SO WHEN YOU COMBINE THE TWO AND HAVE A SPACE MONKEY. IT’S KIND OF A DREAM COME TRUE”**

DIRECTOR GARETH EDWARDS



#### THE PLANET SCARIF

If you're going to construct a Death Star, choose somewhere nice to do it! The Planet Scarif is the site of a beach battle scene with Stormtroopers and AT-ACTS. It is in fact Laamu Atoll in The Maldives.



#### MAKING HYPERSPACE

"Traveling through hyperspace ain't like dusting crops, boy!" the immortal words of Han Solo in A New Hope. Now we know, it's more like a large videoscreen surrounded by camera cranes and technicians.



## THE RETURN OF WICKET

You can't have a Star Wars movie without Warwick Davis we say, by our reckoning he has played more characters in the Star Wars franchise than anyone else, six in total, including doubling for Yoda in The Phantom Menace! In Rogue One he plays an alien with a blaster, we're just not sure which side he's on yet!



## GALACTIC GATWICK AIRPORT

In a first for Gatwick, the entire airport was taken over by Rogue One: A Star Wars Story on 23 November with theming from the car park, through the check-in desks and in the passenger departure lounge. The reason? World Duty Free Stores were going Rogue One crazy.



Star Wars superfan Jack Maynard got to pose with Stormtroopers and Deathtroopers. Through videowalls and displays passengers have been treated to teasers from the movie that launched in the UK on 16 December. There is also a costume exhibit, led by Jyn Erso herself.



In the World Duty Free Store new droid K-2SO puts in an appearance, standing eight feet tall over a mountain of Rogue One merchandise. There's also a Rogue One: Recon 360 VR experience where you get to become a Rebel X-wing pilot for a few minutes. Worth a plane ticket on its own!



## "SA'KALLA!"

That's the battle cry of a brand new character to the Star Wars universe – Pao. This green-grey skinned alien is a Drabata, an amphibious species that make great warriors. Pao served as a commando in the Galactic Civil War, fighting for the Alliance to Restore the Republic.

## "IT'S THE FIRST STAR WARS CHARACTER I'VE PLAYED WHO HAS A BLASTER!"

WARWICK DAVIS ON TWITTER AS HIS ROGUE ONE CHARACTER MADE THE TV TRAILER CUT







#### A BIT OF BISTAN

There's a new character right at the centre of the theft of the plans for the Death Star – he comes from the alien race known as Iakaru, has red eyes and dark hair, and is called Bistan. His role is as door gunner on a U-wing, and he's played by Nick Kellington.

## “IT’S THE ROGUE ONE”

GARETH EDWARDS EXPLAINS THAT HIS STAR WARS MOVIE IS THE FIRST TO GO ROGUE.



#### DIRECTOR KRENNIC'S BEEN TO ICELAND

Ben Mendelsohn plays Director Krennic, seen here in the white robes as he marches across the landscape with a bunch of Deathtroopers. The location is in fact just east of the town of Vík in the southern part of Iceland.



# READING MATTERS

**Words: JOHN HOULIHAN**

Author of the Seraph books and former Editor-in-Chief of CVG.com

SICK CITIES, AN EMERGING SUB GENRE AND A TIMELY ENTRY FROM THE LATE GREAT ADAMS, MAKE UP THIS MONTH'S SELECTIONS

## DOCTOR WHO: THE PIRATE PLANET

DOUGLAS ADAMS & JAMES GOSS



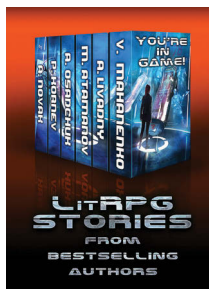
The late lamented Douglas Adams, how we miss his colossal writing genius, and so anything that bears the great man's touch is always worthy of our attention – especially when it also concerns the good Doctor. This novelisation of a classic adventure sees the Doctor transported to the

Roxana/K9 era (another bonus) in search of a component of the all powerful Key of Time. Yet when they inadvertently find themselves on the planet Zanak, which is ruled by the enigmatic Captain, its perpetual Golden Age seems inexplicable. Although it first debuted back in 1978, this is a classic Whovian romp and a reminder for Douglas Adams' many fans of his tragically lost talent.

ANYTHING THAT BEARS THE GREAT MAN'S TOUCH IS ALWAYS WORTHY OF OUR ATTENTION – ESPECIALLY WHEN IT ALSO CONCERNS THE GOOD DOCTOR

## YOU'RE IN GAME!

LITRPG STORIES FROM BEST-SELLING AUTHORS



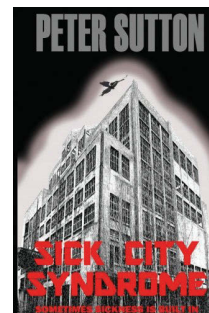
LitRPG has been gaining quite a bit of ground recently, with heavyweights like Charles Stross and Ernest Cline dabbling and if you're a videogames player as well as a reading fan, then this compilation will provide a welcome sampler. LitRPG, for those not in the know, takes elements of videogames, like outlandish characters, levelling-style progression and strange game

worlds, and weaves them into fictional adventures. The movement began in Russia and with a good selection of novellas and short stories from both leading lights and breaking talent, this is a perfect way to dip a toe and find out if this is the sub genre for you.

WHAT IF GHOSTS WERE REAL AND THAT MEDIUMS, FAR FROM BEING OUTRIGHT FRAUDS, COULD ACTUALLY CONTACT OUR DEARLY DEPARTED?

## SICK CITY SYNDROME

PETER SUTTON

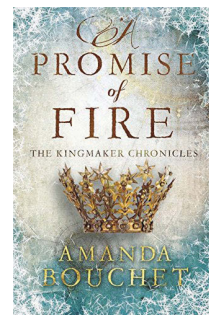


Peter Sutton has won acclaim for his short story collections A Tiding of Magpies and Forever Hungry, but his debut novel posits a more unusual and interesting premise: what if ghosts were real and that mediums, far from being outright frauds, could actually contact our dearly departed? Susan, distraught by the recent loss of her fiancé, finds a dossier that promises to provide answers to his death. Yet as

she begins to probe deeper, she discovers that things are far weirder than she could ever imagine and the city's sickness is truly endemic, in this revelatory and compelling psychological horror.

## BREATH OF FIRE

AMANDA BOUCHET



A Promise of Fire, the first part of this promised Kingmaker trilogy garnered Bouchet numerous Book of the Month awards and was also a finalist for Goodreads Best Debut of 2016. A Breath of Fire sees lost princess Cat desperately trying to escape her destiny, but as the realms erupt into all out war, she is forced to embrace her magical powers. Now with Griffin at her side, can she forge a new

kingdom from the ashes of war, in this promising magical fantasy sequel?



A promotional poster for the video game Mafia III. The background features a large, close-up portrait of the protagonist, Vincent, looking intensely at the viewer. To his left, a smaller image shows a man in a red jacket holding a gun. To his right, three men in suits and hats are walking down a street. At the bottom, a man in a suit is seen from behind, reaching out towards a classic blue car with its headlights on in a city street at night.

# FAMILY IS WHO YOU **DIE FOR**

# MAFIA **III**

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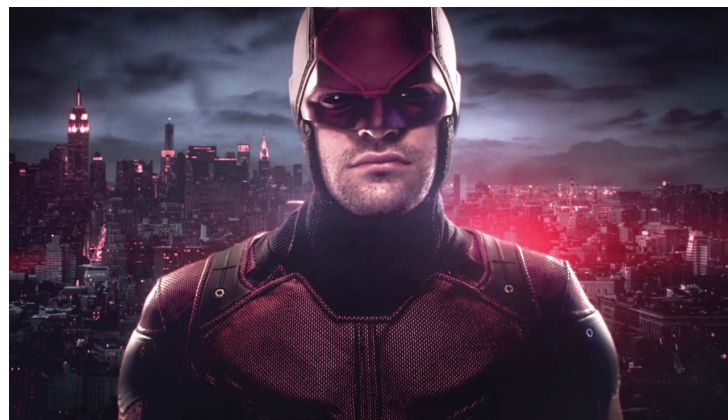
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US FANS OF SUPER HERO TV AND MOVIES ARE SPOILED ROTTEN THESE DAYS, NOT ONLY CAN WE ENJOY THE CINEMATIC UNIVERSES OF THE WORLD'S TWO GIANTS OF COMIC BOOKS, THEY HAVE INCREDIBLE TV TOO. THIS MONTH WE ASK TWO ARGUMENTATIVE TYPES, WHICH IS BEST – MARVEL OR DC TV SHOWS?

## FIGHTING TALK

# IN THE MARVEL VS DC TV BATTLE...



## ...Marvel just do TV better

SAYS CLAIRE LIM

Ahh, the age old debate of Marvel Vs DC. Both giants have their pros and cons with a roster of super heroes that are sometimes uncannily similar, so there's sometimes a fine line when it comes to who's actually 'best'. Focussing on super hero TV shows though, Marvel most definitely wins all the prizes – the casting and tone of each Marvel TV show pips DC every time.

As Marvel has tightened its grip with each cinematic release, their move to make Daredevil, Jessica Jones and Luke Cage tonally different was a wise decision. Featuring uncompromising violence and adult themes with smatterings of easter eggs and references to Marvel's cinematic universe, their Netflix shows have been groundbreaking super hero television. Then there's shows like Agent Carter and Agent's of SHIELD. Neither of these shows are as 'dark' as their Netflix counterparts, but they continue with the same feel as the films, giving fans a choice and breaking the tonal monotony. Although, these shows exist in a world where super heroes are a reality, the focus here is (a little) more on the human element, which is a nice touch and avoids the dreaded 'super hero fatigue'. DC's TV shows just fall short when it comes to interesting

and varied television. Lois & Clarke: The New Adventures of Superman focussed on Clark Kent's life in Metropolis and the relationship between him and Lois Lane, but the series lost it's pace and felt more like a lame drama by the end. Smallville was a different take on Superman, following Clark's story as a teen growing up in Smallville but it ended up like Dawson's Creek with superpowers, really saccharine and a little lame.

Supergirl's rise in popularity is absolutely justified, seeing an iconic female character on screen is important, but although there are some fun moments, the goofiness and pop culture quips feel forced. The Flash also falls into the somewhat hammy category alongside Arrow, whilst Gotham with its grittier backdrop fails to be the dark TV noir it should and DC's Legends of Tomorrow is vibrant, yes, but looks and feels ridiculous, plus all of these shows inhabit their own universe, different cast and all, running separate from their cinematic counterparts. It just feels messy.

Marvel wins this battle hands down, offering drama with depth, compelling stories and likeable heroes that aren't cynical made-for-TV constructs. All hail Marvel and may their reign continue!





## ...DC's TV shows are far superior

SAYS CHRIS HALLAM

Staging a pitched battle between Marvel and DC is rather like organising a wrestling match between Father Christmas and the Easter Bunny. We love both, both undeniably bring joy to millions and yet we'd still willingly pay good money to watch the two beat seven shades out of each other in a controlled competitive environment. And my money's on the bunny.

On the big screen, Marvel tends to dominate, producing more films and making more box office than their slightly older counterpart. On TV, however, the roles are almost exactly reversed. DC produce more and I would argue with the likes of *The Flash*, *Arrow*, *Gotham*, *Supergirl* and *Preacher*, better shows than their Marvel rivals. But why, True Believers, should this be so?

Could it just be down to experience? From George Reeves' Superman back in the Fifties onwards, to Adam West's Batman, down to Lois and Clark and *Smallville*, DC has never really stopped putting their stuff on TV. Marvel, in contrast, barely produced any live action TV drama between the end of Bill Bixby's *The Incredible Hulk* in 1983 until the arrival of Marvel's *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* 30 years later. I am not here to attack *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* It has a silly name

but is an okay show. But it has never come close to capturing the magic of *The Avengers* films. Nor is it a patch on DC's rival the award-winning *Arrow*, a show which has now notched up 100 episodes. Nor is the Marvel show anywhere near the standard of *Arrow*'s acclaimed spin-off *The Flash*. Perhaps this is another factor in DC's TV success: whereas Marvel's creations all exist supposedly in real world settings such as New York, DC is liberated by locating their tales in entirely fictional environments such as *Gotham* with *Arrow*, *The Flash* and *Legends of Tomorrow* all existing within the same clearly defined Arrowverse.

With the huge success of *Preacher* on Amazon Prime based on the comics by Garth Ennis and the late Steve Dillon, DC has also taken bold steps towards moving beyond the super hero realm for its comic-based TV content, with Neil Gaiman's *Lucifer* also reflecting part of this trend. And let's not forget *Supergirl* which has transformed one of cinema's most notorious flops into a big TV success. Ultimately, with new DC series *Powerless*, *Ronin* and *Y: The Last Man* all in the pipeline, and with Marvel planning seasons of *The Punisher*, *Legion* and *The Inhumans*, this is a war which still has some way to run. Sit back and enjoy as we watch the epic battle!

DC has had big success in bringing *The Flash* to the small screen.



# YOUR SAY

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR MARVEL AND DC TV COMMENTS ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER. HERE'S A SELECTION OF THE PRINTABLE ONES...

## FIGHTING

*What a question! There are so many fab TV shows at the moment. I'm torn between my personal favourites, DC's The Flash and Marvel's Daredevil. It's probably Daredevil, by a hair's breadth. The introduction of The Punisher in season two was superb, and I can't wait for the solo series. I'm also eagerly anticipating season three, with the hope team Nelson and Murdock get things back on track! I'm usually outvoted by the kids though, who are all about DC.*

**CLARE LESTON**

**Marvel hands down!**

**LIAM-PAUL ROTHWELL**

*The DC shows are fun and have heart. The Netflix Marvel shows are adult and more relatable.*

**NEIL GRIMSHAW**

Whether it's DC or Marvel that have the best TV shows, what really matters is that there is so much great TV that has been adapted from comics books. I've really enjoyed Luke Cage, Preacher, Outcast and of course there's still The Walking Dead.

**MALCOLM WINTERS**

Marvel win this battle every time for me. Jessica Jones on Netflix was a fantastic adaptation, gritty and real super hero powers rather than the Spandex and fizz of the DC shows like The Flash. My problem is finding enough time to watch it all - I'm planning to binge-watch Luke Cage over Christmas.

**SARAH HOWARD**

**Just as they have done in the cinema, Marvel is winning the TV show race. Shows like Arrow, Supergirl and Legends of Tomorrow are just too shallow for my liking.**

**COLIN SAUNDERS**

It all depends on your age really. I have two boys under 11 in my house and The Flash has ruled the roost for months now. They have watched every episode back to back, and are now moving on to Arrow. Marvel has a much darker tone and is more adult, so I wouldn't even let them watch those shows.

**TRACEY MALLARD**

*Well none of the comic book super hero shows are going to please all of the fans of the original material. A director, writer or actor can take a show off in a direction that you never imagined it would when reading the comic. For me comics and TV are kept very separate.*

**DARREN WOOLWORTH**

**Who cares? As long as there is quality television, saving me money on over-priced cinema tickets, I'm a happy geek! But, for the record, Marvel rocks.**

**DAVID SMITH**



## BACK

### THE GEEKY MONKEY WORLD

WE'RE NOT JUST A MAGAZINE YOU KNOW, YOU'LL FIND US IN ALL THE USUAL SOCIAL PLACES AND WE HAVE A NEW PODCAST FOR YOU TO ENJOY TOO...

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to win some great geek gear, the latest movie trailers and all the gossip that keeps the geek train chugging on. You can also message us and get your views onto this Fighting Back page. Go on, get involved!

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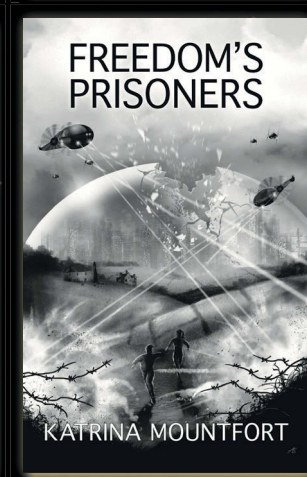
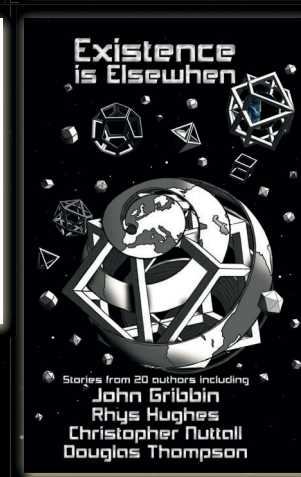
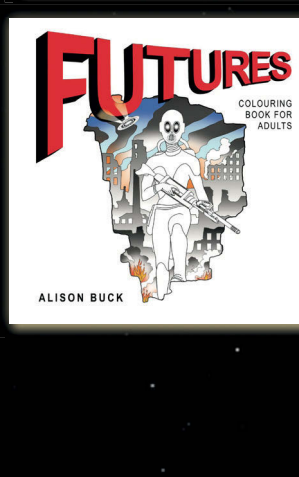
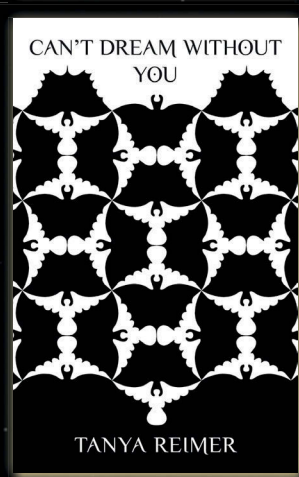
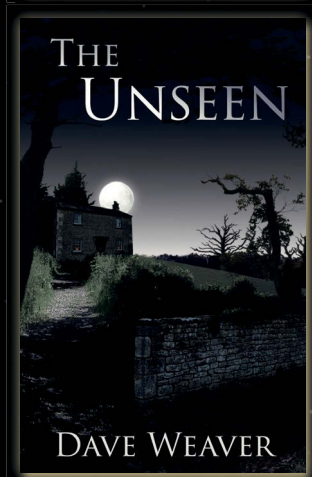
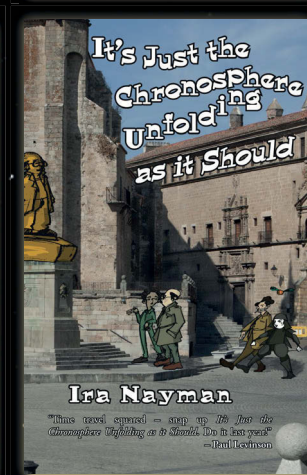
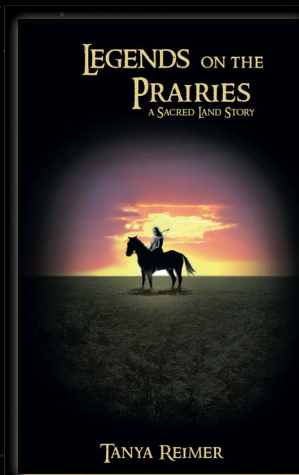
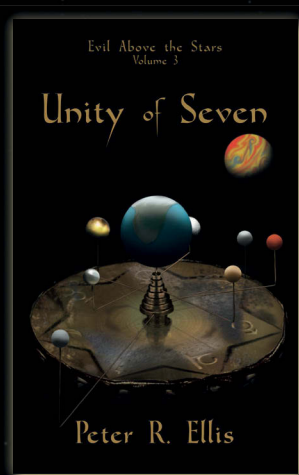
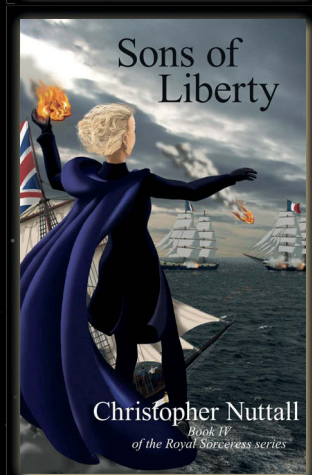
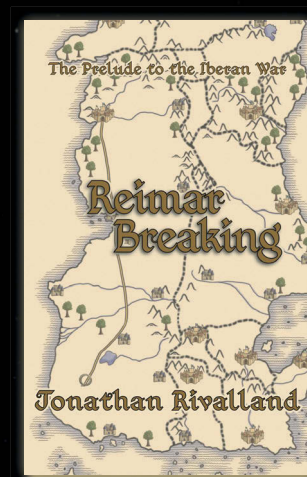
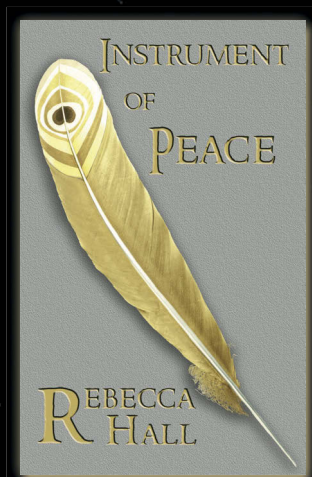
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## DON'T MISS



[THE BIG ONE]

## Assassin's Creed

// PREMIERE DATE, 1 JANUARY // STUDIO, 20TH CENTURY FOX // DIRECTOR, JUSTIN KURZEL  
// STARRING, MICHAEL FASSBENDER, MARION COTILLARD, JEREMY IRONS

Trailers for upcoming movies can be pretty damn deceptive. Sometimes they reveal all the best moments, gags or in some cases even endings. Other times they offer up the promise of a movie that – based on a two and half-minute sizzle reel – could be the best flick of the year. Take Warcraft for example, the last big videogame-to-movie adaptation that we here at Geeky Monkey and the rest of the world were suckered in by in the run up to release.

Legendary Pictures promised a Lord of the Rings-style opus with thrilling set pieces and deep narrative that honoured the source material, but ultimately delivered one of the worst films of the year, a laughable CGI mess with a flimsy script that's almost on par with the ill-fated Super Mario Bros film from 1993. Making a decent videogame adaptation is nigh on impossible it would seem.

Enter Ubisoft, 20th Century Fox and Assassin's Creed, the next pixel-based project making the jump from consoles to celluloid in January that hopes to buck that trend and put an end to the curse that's plagued movies of this ilk for decades now. And you know what? It just might (but don't hold us to that!). For one, it's got a whopping great budget, and both studios have spared no expense with a shoot that took the production team from London to Malta and on to Spain.

It also happens to have some serious clout behind it, including Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons and Brendan Gleeson, as well as director Justin Kurzel, who helmed the critically acclaimed adaptation of Macbeth starring Fassbender and Cotillard in 2015. Based on the people in front and behind the camera, it would appear that Ubisoft and 20th Century Fox are doing everything in their power to ensure Assassin's Creed delivers both box office numbers and solid reviews from the critics currently sharpening their knives in

## IT'S GOT A WHOPPING GREAT BUDGET, AND BOTH STUDIOS HAVE SPARED NO EXPENSE

anticipation of another Warcraft. Production wasn't rushed either, it's taken four writers to crack the story, which features brand new characters created for the film and takes it cues from the game universe, rather than slavishly adhering to the narratives created by the game writers in the multiple entries over the years. Fassbender plays Callum Lynch, a man on the verge of execution who discovers he is the descendant of the secret Assassins society through the magic of unlocked genetic memories. It was this idea of DNA memory that drew the actor to the project in the first place. "It seemed to me to make sense in terms of a scientific theory, that we carry in our DNA the experiences and the knowledge of our ancestors," says the actor. "So, for example, when you sort of walk into a room you feel is not safe, and the hairs stand up on the back of your neck and you have a sort of almost sixth sense, that sixth sense comes from your ancestors' experience."

Sound science or not, we're hoping the main reason Fassbender signed on to not only star in, but produce the movie is that the script is on par with the calibre of his past work (with the exception of X-Men: Apocalypse, of course). With Assassin's Creed leaping onto screens from 1 January, we'll be finding out very soon. **GM**

**A New Year's Day treat – Assassin's Creed premieres in the UK on 1 January from 20th Century Fox.**







## OUT THIS MONTH // MOVIES



### All aboard for Passengers, a smart sci-fi film

Hitting screens in the coming month is *Passengers*, a trippy sci-fi flick about two passengers aboard a spaceship destined for a distant planet that wake decades ahead of schedule and find themselves battling to save the lives of the rest of the sleeping passengers when the ship malfunctions.

The film has been in development hell for eons, with the script by Doctor Strange scribe Jon Spaihts first making waves on the 2007 Blacklist (a list designed to highlight the year's best unproduced scripts), and at one point even Keanu Reeves was attached to star, but ultimately that version of the film fell apart before the project came into the hands of Sony Pictures and director Morten Tyldum, who helmed the Oscar nominated *The Imitation Game*.

With Chris Pratt and Jennifer Lawrence now front and centre, it looks like one of the most talked about science fiction projects in La-La-Land is about hit screens with a bang, and having read the script for the film when it first surfaced we can assure you this one is going to turn heads thanks to a swathe of killer twists and turns that'll have you scooping your jaw off the floor by the time the credits roll.

Oh, and it gets pretty steamy in places too. So much so Lawrence admitted to hitting the bottle prior to filming the scene in order to dull her nerves. Turns out that was a very bad idea. "It led to more anxiety when I got home because I was like, 'What have I done? I don't know.'" she said. "He was married, and it was going to be my first time kissing a married man and guilt is the worst feeling in your stomach. I knew it was my job, but I couldn't tell my stomach that. So I called my mom and I was like, 'Will you just tell me it's okay?' That was the most vulnerable I've ever been." Sex scenes aside, this is seriously smart sci-fi, so book your tickets now, you won't be disappointed. **GM**

#### A BOY AND HIS BEAST

If science fiction isn't your thing then we recommend checking out J.A. Bayona's superb adaptation of Patrick Ness' tearjerker, *A Monster Calls*. While the film may be aimed at minors, the subject tends to lean a little too dark side for younger audiences. It tells the tale of Conor – a young boy struggling to cope with the fact his mother is dying of terminal cancer, as well as being bullied in school – he creates a tree-shaped monster to confess his inner fears to. Be warned: there wasn't a dry eye in the place when we caught this at a press screening.



#### 21 December

★ *Passengers*  
// SONY PICTURES

#### 26 December

★ *Collateral Beauty*  
// WARNER BROS

#### 1 January

★ *Assassin's Creed*  
// 20TH CENTURY FOX

★ *A Monster Calls*  
// ENTERTAINMENT ONE

★ *Silence*  
// STUDIOCANAL

#### 13 January

★ *The Bye Bye Man*  
// ENTERTAINMENT FILM

★ *Underworld: Blood Wars*  
// SONY PICTURES

#### 19 January

★ *xXx 3: The Return of Xander Cage*  
// PARAMOUNT PICTURES

#### 20 January

★ *Split*  
// UNIVERSAL PICTURES

#### 25 January

★ *Ghost in the Shell*  
// NATIONAL AMUSEMENTS





SHERLOCK

## Did you miss me?

Yes, Sherlock, we certainly did. It's been virtually a full year since we last saw the formidable double act of Holmes and Watson (Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman) in action in the special Victorian themed episode The Abominable Bride. The bad news? It's not Holmes asking if we've missed him but his malevolent adversary, James Moriarty (Andrew Scott). The good news? All three are back in the fourth series of Sherlock which starts on New Year's Day, 2017.

Toby Jones will be joining the cast as one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's most villainous creations, Culverton Smith, but otherwise with Una Stubbs, Freeman's on and off screen partner Amanda Abbington and co-creator/Mycroft Holmes Mark Gatiss all returning to the cast, and with the scenario restored to the 21st century, this could be seen as a return to business as usual for Sherlock. But fans will know to expect more of this groundbreaking show than that. After all, the last series managed to net more viewers than any other TV drama in Britain since 2001. Despite this, much of the content for the fourth series continues to be shrouded in a degree of mystery usually more akin to one of Mr Holmes' very own cases. However, we do know that the titles to two of the episodes are The Six Thatchers and The Lying Detective.

Sherlock's Benedict Cumberbatch, of course, recently starred as super hero Doctor Strange. Super heroes also provide a theme for this year's Christmas day special of Doctor Who titled The Return of Captain Mysterio. This will see US actor Bruce Chatwin in the role of the mysterious

figure who will be taking on the task of aiding and abetting Peter Capaldi's Doctor as he combats some as yet unspecified but deadly alien menace. Charity Wakefield will also appear in the role of an investigative reporter. Christmas without Doctor Who? One wonders how we managed before. **GM**

### SLAYING A DRAGON

Sky One viewers will receive a welcome Christmas Day dose of fantasy with the broadcast of the potentially epic The Last Dragonslayer. Adapted by Tom Edge and set in a world which blends the modern and medieval eras, the cast includes Ellise Chappell, John Bradley of Game of Thrones and Ricky Tomlinson, with Richard E Grant, no less, providing the voice of the dragon himself. And as it's based on the first of a series of books from author Jasper Fforde, The Last Dragonslayer, despite its name, might very well end up marking the beginning of a saga, rather than the end.



#### Streaming

- ★ **Designated Survivor**  
// NETFLIX
- ★ **For the Love of Spock**  
// NETFLIX
- ★ **Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency**  
// NETFLIX
- ★ **Vikings, Season 4b**  
// AMAZON PRIME
- ★ **The Man in the High Castle, Season 2**  
// AMAZON PRIME

#### 25 December

- ★ **Doctor Who Christmas Special**  
// BBC ONE
- ★ **The Last Dragonslayer**  
// SKY ONE

#### 26 December

- ★ **Robot Wars Christmas Special**  
// BBC TWO

#### 1 January

- ★ **Sherlock, Season 4**  
// BBC ONE

#### 13 January

- ★ **Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events**  
// NETFLIX





RESIDENT EVIL 7: BIOHAZARD

## Ready yourselves for southern discomfort

Here's the thing. Resident Evil 4 utterly hijacked the Resident Evil franchise and set it on a totally different course. Sure, it was and still is undeniably a great game, thick with atmosphere and taught with tension but, unlike its predecessors, it was a shooter way more than it was a survival horror. And so were all the Resis that followed.

Well Resident Evil 7 undoubtedly wants to make amends for the perversions of its past and so is (hopefully) going to come at you like a blast of refreshingly rancid (and somewhat familiar) air. Set within the confines of a plantation in the American South and its excessively decrepit mansion, it's swapping Resident Evil 6's worldwide jaunt and increasingly ridiculous tale of global bioterrorism for something far more focused, far less flamboyant, and nowhere near as shooty-shooty. It's also going to be experienced via what Capcom is calling an 'Isolated View' perspective, just to add deeper level of personal involvement. Ooh!

What they really mean, of course, is that you'll be seeing the game through the eyes of its protagonist, Ethan, rather than by looking over his shoulder. It's a first-person perspective game, then, and one about a bloke looking for his missing wife rather than a super soldier/agent saving the world. Own some PlayStation VR goggles? You can use them and really feel like you live inside Ethan's skull.

Written by Richard Pearsey, who was partially responsible for Spec Ops: The Line's poignantly affecting narrative, and focusing on Ethan's dealings with the quite insane Baker family (who do a mean impersonation of The Sawyers from The Texas Chainsaw Massacre), Resident Evil 7 doesn't hide its influences. It's a bit like Konami's now unavailable Silent Hill's P.T. and a bigger bit like Red Barrels' new wave take on the survival horror genre, Outland. One game it won't be like is Resident Evil 6. Marvellous. **GM**

### ORIGINAL GANGSTER

The latest in Sega's consistently entertaining Yakuza series again sees Kazuma Kiryu dealing with the moral complexities of criminal life in fictionalised versions of Tokyo and Osaka, but this time back in the neon-lit December of 1989. Harsh and brutal when they need to be but also sweet, endearing and effortlessly entertaining, if you've never played a Yakuza game then now is the time to get involved in their unique sandboxed arcade beauty. You'll laugh, you'll cry, perform karaoke, beat the living \*&\$! out of thugs, visit arcades to play Space Harrier, Super Hang-On and Out Run, and be, as Coolio might say, the kind of G little homies wanna be like.



### 16 December

★ **Minecraft Story Mode Complete Adventure**  
// WiiU

### 31 December

★ **Pineview Drive**  
// XB1, PS4, WiiU

### 24 January

★ **Resident Evil 7 Biohazard**  
// PS4, XB1, PC

★ **Yakuza 0**  
// PS4

★ **Kingdom Hearts HD 2.8 Final Chapter Prologue**  
// PS4

### 27 January

★ **ABZU**  
// XB1

### 31 January

★ **Hitman: The Complete First Season**  
// PS4, XB1, PC

★ **Joe's Diner**  
// PS4, XB1, WiiU

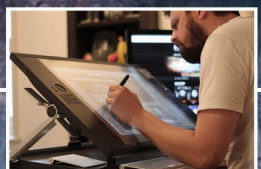


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# the Prisoner

## Escaping The Village, 50 Years On

FROM ARRIVAL TO FALL OUT, THE PRISONER HAS ENTHRALLED AND BAFFLED SUCCESSIONAL GENERATIONS. WE HEAD TO PORTMEIRION IN WALES, THE REAL VILLAGE, FOR INFORMATION ON WHY MCGOOHAN'S MASTERPIECE IS STILL NUMBER ONE...

**Words: STEVE HILL**

He is not a number, he is a freelance journalist

**B**y hook or by crook, I will escape. "I cannot stop you," says a guard in an Eastern European accent. Bypassing his feeble effort, I go down a secret path behind the hospital and stealthily join a queue for a shuttle bus. Safely aboard, this takes me to a severely flooded field, where hundreds of cars lie underwater. Thankfully, mine is parked on stony ground. I launch my wellies into a skip and head east, free at last. Fifty years to the day that filming began on *The Prisoner*, I have finally managed to escape The Village.

Rewind to 24 hours earlier – I am being driven around The Village at breakneck pace in a Mini Moke taxi (local service only) while *All You Need Is Love* by The Beatles blares out of the bluetooth speaker. Shouting "Unmutual!" at bedraggled soap dodgers, they stare back with a combination of bemusement and indifference: "Disharmonious!"

The immaculately refurbished vehicle belongs to Simon Althorne (number 42) of Wakefield, who bought it for two grand and completely rebuilt it right down to the authentic mud flaps, with even a cue ball fitted atop the mini gear stick as a nod to Rover, the inflatable guardian of The Village. The Yorkshire car nut is a member of Six Of One, The Prisoner Appreciation Society, of which series creator and star Patrick McGoochan was Honorary President until his death in 2009. Part fan club, part am-dram society, they can also stake a claim to be the original cosplayers, having been dressing up as characters from the show since 1977. As usual, they're in full costume for Festival No. 6, held annually in Portmeirion, North Wales.

Like many, Moke driver Althorne first saw *The Prisoner* on the nascent Channel Four in the early 80s. "When I first watched it, I couldn't ▶











get into it," he says. "I was probably only 10 or 11 at the time. And then we came here just as visitors to Portmeirion. Six Of One were here doing a convention and we just got completely hooked. As soon as we got back from our anniversary weekend I got the box set and we were just hooked absolutely. I love the music, I love the intrigue, I love the cars, it's the cars that get me. My wife's heavily into the music, she loves the music side of it, that's where we've got the mutual respect for the programme. It was of its time, I think it was a brilliant piece of film making. I think if you look back at what Patrick saw you can really see where he was going with it all, and a lot of what he thought has basically come true. The surveillance and everything that comes with it, that's what he was predicting."

Fellow Six Of One member Roy Stambrow (number 12) is arguably the alpha male of the group, more geezer than geek, and he also cites the music, having picked up a copy of the soundtrack on a visit to Portmeirion with his parents in the 80s.

"It just blew me away," he says. "I was DJing at the time and all the incidental music was just so different, from Bizet to Pop Goes the Weasel, all these little bits and bobs they'd got from sound departments. I just thought I've got to watch this series, the music is just so amazing. I got the videos and started watching them. I immediately became hooked."

As for the unique setting, Stambrow claims, "Portmeirion will never shake off The Prisoner and The Prisoner will never shake off Portmeirion. How many other shows can you go and stay in the set where something was filmed? You can't do it with Star Trek, you can't do it with James Bond, Star Wars. This is a living, working set."

Remarkably for such a distinctive soundtrack, the vast majority of the music in The Prisoner was indeed lifted from library recordings and simply made to fit the action. Indeed, the only significant bespoke

music is the iconic theme tune by prolific genius Ron Grainer, and even that was only accepted by McGoohan after he had turned down two other efforts.

On the opening day of Festival No. 6, a Prisoner panel includes an impromptu pop quiz hosted by DJ Andy Votel – who claims to own every piece of Prisoner music on vinyl – whereby contestants identify specific episodes from a snippet of the soundtrack, generally within a couple of seconds. First prize goes to Six Of One's Tim Bourne, who beseeches non-believers in the audience: "Even if you don't watch anything else, just watch the first episode, Arrival. Every key element of the series is in there, from the look, the patchwork music, the library stuff, all the main concepts about what he's fighting against."

The audience is also treated to some fascinating secretly filmed Cine 8 footage of McGoohan on the set in Portmeirion, at one point looking particularly angry. It's followed by a clip of his previous series, Danger Man, the opening episode of which, View from the Villa (1960), was also filmed in Portmeirion, something that clearly resonated with McGoohan at the time.

A huge star by the time Danger Man ended in 1966, it was this power that enabled McGoohan to convince ITV's Lew Grade to green light The Prisoner, despite surely having little clue as to what he was about to unleash. If Danger Man was a straightforward action adventure, then The Prisoner was the polar opposite, a surrealist allegorical conundrum with overtones of societal conformity and the free will of the individual.

As the groundbreaking title sequence explains, it's the simple tale of a spy who resigns and is then gassed in his London flat, awaking in a replica version, albeit in a quaint Italianate village of ►





**A HUGE STAR BY THE TIME DANGER MAN ENDED IN 1966, IT WAS THIS POWER THAT ENABLED MCGOOHAN TO CONVINCE ITV'S LEW GRADE TO GREEN LIGHT THE PRISONER**

It may be almost 50 years since The Prisoner wowed audiences, but the series still holds up today. If you've not experienced it, we recommend some binge-watching!





## GEEK WILL EAT ITSELF

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then *The Prisoner* has been flattered on a number of occasions, not least when it was parodied in *The Simpsons*. Somewhat more obscure is an episode of *The Avengers* called *Wish You Were Here*, in which guests check in to a hotel but can never leave. A self-professed *Prisoner* parody, it's fairly pedestrian stuff, and if anything accentuates the gulf between *The Prisoner* and all other shows of the time. The director? Don Chaffey, who also directed... *The Prisoner*.



The *Prisoner* fans are obsessive, right down to recreating the cars and props from the series in minute detail. God love 'em.

indeterminate geography - essentially an Orwellian Center Parcs. With numbers replacing names, over the course of 17 episodes a rotating cast of Number Twos attempt to discover why Number Six resigned, while he himself attempts to uncover the identity of Number One, and of course, escape. Confused? You will be.

One man who knows a lot about *The Prisoner* is Brian Gorman, writer and star of one-man play, *Everyman: The Story of Patrick McGooohan* - *The Prisoner*, which he has now adapted into a graphic novel. (Spotter's badge for those who know that McGooohan's production company was called *Everyman Films*, itself a nod to the morality plays of the Middle Ages). As a child, Gorman had heard about the programme from his parents, and finally tracked down a couple of episodes on VHS before recording it from Channel Four.

"I absolutely loved everything about it," says the avuncular Wiganer. "The music, the visuals, the colour, and particularly McGooohan. McGooohan was somebody who looked as though he'd come from a different planet. This was a guy who was just, my favourite term is 'making you have it.' And if you didn't want it, tough. His anger and passion just radiated out of the television set and you could tell with *The Prisoner* that this wasn't just a television series that he was being paid to be in. This was something that was a very, very personal experience for him. It was so well done. *The Prisoner* had that sense that there was somebody trying to make something very good. I was a massive fan of the ITC series, you know, *Department S*, *Man In A Suitcase*, *The Champions*, but they all suffered from the same thing - the end of every episode, happy ending, the next episode it's as if nothing's ever happened. *The Prisoner* just takes it one massive step beyond. You get all the elements of the ITC series, fantastic theme tune, fast-paced opening, fantastical sets, colour, but McGooohan takes it way beyond that into the realms of art, but proper art, accessible art."

As with all art, it is open to interpretation, but the leap that *The Prisoner* made from the TV fare of the time is still hard to comprehend, given that this was a prime time show watched, and subsequently debated, by millions. It's arguably the first example of so-called lean-in television.

As Gorman says, "Imagine Roger Moore doing his fifth series of *The Saint* and then saying 'I want to something better, bigger, different' and Lew Grade saying 'OK Roger, do whatever you want.' And imagine Roger Moore suddenly turning out *The Prisoner*. It's not going to happen is it? McGooohan was driven by demons, and he hated being a star, he hated being a sex symbol leading man, and he wanted to do something very different. I wouldn't say he hoodwinked Lew Grade, but Lew Grade certainly didn't know what he was in for. But he backed him, give him his due."

For that we should all be eternally grateful, not least Gorman, whose research led him deep into McGooohan's psyche.

"I think McGooohan just revealed everything about himself," he says. "The way I'd describe *Everyman*, the play and the book, is it's like lifting the top of McGooohan's head off in 1968 and looking at everything that created *The Prisoner*. And it's all in McGooohan's life. Almost every major thing that happened to McGooohan is in *The Prisoner*, even before he was born. They were very devout Catholics, very poor family, and she was praying for a boy, if it's a boy he's going to be a Catholic priest. And he trained and apparently he hated it because he asked too many questions. And that is straight out of *The Prisoner*, questioning everything. Don't take anybody's word for anything, question everything."

Despite his faith, McGooohan denied that there was a religious element to *The Prisoner*, although he conceded that there might have



been a subconscious element. Another lazy theory is that it was the 60s, so everybody was on drugs, hence the psychedelic visuals and ideas. While McGoohan's Number Six is frequently pumped full of drugs in the programme, there is no suggestion that the same was true off screen.

"I doubt very much McGoohan was," says Brian Gorman. "He liked a drink, that much is certain. He did crash his car as a drink-driver in Africa when he was filming in the 50s. McGoohan didn't need drugs. Everything in *The Prisoner* is from McGoohan's life, but he was unafraid to go crazy with it – let's experiment. He's like Salvador Dali or Picasso, let's splash some colour, let's dress in these outlandish outfits. He just went for it."

There's some debate as to whether Number Six was actually John Drake from *Danger Man*, something that McGoohan denied despite compelling evidence.

"Well he is and he isn't," offers Gorman, helpfully. "I think McGoohan used the fact that he was identified as John Drake in the public perception and he used those trappings. And of course in *The Girl Who Was Death* you've got Christopher Benjamin playing Potter, the same character he played in *Danger Man*. It is basically John Drake, but John Drake gone into an alternate universe. It is John Drake, but it's not John Drake. It's McGoohan playing with public perceptions. It's like David Bowie – is the Thin White Duke actually Ziggy Stardust? And it came in '67, the Summer Of Love and The Beatles and all that. I think McGoohan probably thought 'I've got to throw everything into this now, because I've got the power, the timing I think is right, let's go for it.' And I think he almost had a nervous breakdown doing it."

Involved in almost every aspect of the production, by all accounts the extremely driven McGoohan was not the easiest person to work with. According to Gorman, "I think McGoohan just let the barriers down and flooded *The Prisoner*, every aspect of it. He fired directors on the first day of filming, he left people in tears, people said he was an insane bully."

In this dictatorial approach to his outsider art, there are comparisons to be drawn with Mark E Smith of The Fall, who is in fact a huge *Prisoner* fan and would frequently subject his group to compulsory viewings during long journeys on the tour bus. Further celebrity endorsement comes from Jools Holland, who apparently lives in a *Prisoner*-styled house and drives a replica Lotus. At Festival No. 6, comedian Johnny Vegas outed himself as a devotee, insisting on posing for a photo with members of Six Of One. And Iron Maiden has recorded not one, but two songs about the programme – *The Prisoner* and *Back in the Village*.

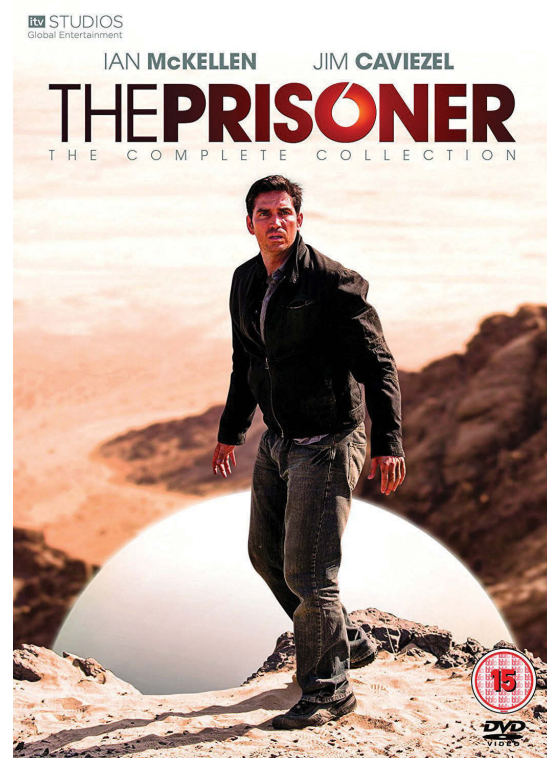
Ultimately *The Prisoner* is for everyman, with fans claiming ownership of the series to an extent rarely seen with other shows. Much of this seems to stem from the impact it had the first time they saw it, and I am another who had my eyes opened by the newly launched Channel Four. Simply having a fourth channel was a seismic event, never mind the heady combination of *Countdown*, *Brookside* and *The Prisoner*.

In an inadvertent homage to the original broadcast, I watched much if it on a black and white portable Ferguson TV in my bedroom. It's still in my loft, and still works, a tribute to an earlier age. On that dusty screen once danced a melange of ideas and philosophies that were literally educational. One night, while desperately studying for a history exam, I drew inspiration from the speed-learning techniques outlined in the sixth episode, *The General*. Programming my ZX Spectrum to flash up the relevant facts and dates on screen, I condensed two years of work into a couple of minutes. I got a B. ►



## IT'S YOUR FUNERAL

The 2009 six-part AMC remake is a bone of contention for *Prisoner* fans, with many refusing to even acknowledge it. How bad is it? Think Nicolas Cage in *The Wicker Man* bad, but without the laughs. Sir Ian McKellen as Number Two manfully attempts to hold it together, but Jim Caviezel's Number Six is little more than a frowny avatar. It lifts a couple of scenes from the original, but arguably has more in common with M Night Shyamalan's preposterous *Wayward Pines*, which at least had the decency to be entertaining. There's a huge difference between enigmatic and incoherent, and AMC's *The Prisoner* is simply boring, an accusation that could never be levelled at McGoohan's singular vision. Ultimately there is more drama, intrigue and mystery in the title sequence of the original than the entire plodding AMC series. It's perhaps a small mercy that McGoohan didn't live to see it.







## THE FACT THAT MCGOOHAN PUT SO MUCH OF HIMSELF INTO THE PRISONER MAY EXPLAIN WHY IT'S STILL BEING CELEBRATED HALF A CENTURY LATER

It must have been shown again in the 90s, as I remember bullying my university housemates into watching it on a weekly basis. Some of them even attempted to gain some insight by ingesting sizeable quantities of hallucinogens, with mixed results. And while their bedroom walls were adorned with Happy Mondays and Stone Roses, mine featured the somewhat less fashionable official Prisoner calendar. Be seeing you...

It's this legacy obsession that has ultimately led to me standing on a wet lawn in Wales on a Sunday morning as a human chess piece. Playing the White King's Rook in Six Of One's re-enactment of the scene from Checkmate – as featured in Geeky Monkey issue 12 – it's a non-moving, non-speaking role, which is exactly how I like it. Sadly, due to the adverse weather, health and safety precludes us from using the actual lawn, and it's a truncated chessboard on an adjoining surface. Hungover revellers look on with barely concealed incredulity, not least when a freshly inflated Rover weather balloon is unleashed onto the chessboard. Attempting to paddle it back into play, a white pawn gives it a gentle tap and tragically bursts it. "That's another 30 quid gone," deadpans a Six Of Oner, as someone somewhere plays a snippet of Dire Straits' Money For Nothing.

Having watched Arrival before my arrival, back in civilisation I plough through the entire series. Compelling as it is, it doesn't necessarily lend itself to binge viewing, as you arguably need a week to process each episode. I'd forgotten how violent it was, with regular extended punch-ups and the occasional brutal death. And what's evident in 2016 that may not have been obvious in the 80s or even 90s is the uncanny prophesising of new technology. Cordless phones are commonplace, Schizoid Man features a rudimentary light gun game, and the dream manipulation in A, B & C is only now being explored using virtual reality.

The Prisoner is by no means beyond criticism, and indeed was widely despised at the time, to the extent that McGoohan had to go into hiding after the fallout of the final episode. There's a dash of misogyny, there are a couple of turgid episodes, and the Wild West one is particularly self-indulgent, with McGoohan of no fixed accent. Notable guest appearances include the luvvies' luvvie, Donald Sinden, as well as Mark Eden, who went on to portray Alan Bradley in Coronation Street, meeting a grisly end under a tram while chasing Rita Fairclough round Blackpool.

With the planned number of episodes in a seemingly constant state of flux, it is apparent by the end that McGoohan was making it up as he went along.

"The last four episodes are all over the place because he's painted himself into a corner," says Brian Gorman. "Who's Number One? How do we resolve it? And apparently he wrote the last episode in three days on whiskey and sandwiches. It collapses in on itself because it's got nowhere to go. Every piece of art depends on the time you look at it and the context. Now of course it's seen as that's how it's meant to be. McGoohan was dead on his feet. If you watch Fall Out he has almost no dialogue and when he's standing up there with the gavel and he's trying to make a speech, when you see him in close-up the guy's knackered, he's at the end of his tether."

The fact that McGoohan put so much of himself into The Prisoner may explain why it's still being celebrated half a century later. He rarely discussed the show in the following decades, but there are a few excellent clips on YouTube, including an incongruous interview with the late Mike Smith. Flanked by the fawning Six Of One society, a grizzled McGoohan drawls, "If they understand it, please pass the understanding on to me. I'd love to know what it's about..." **GM**

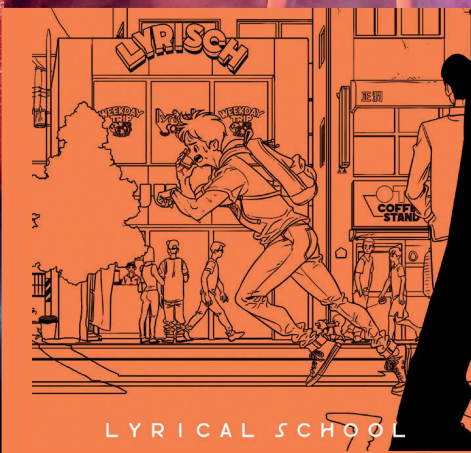


# FLOW ANIME BEST 極

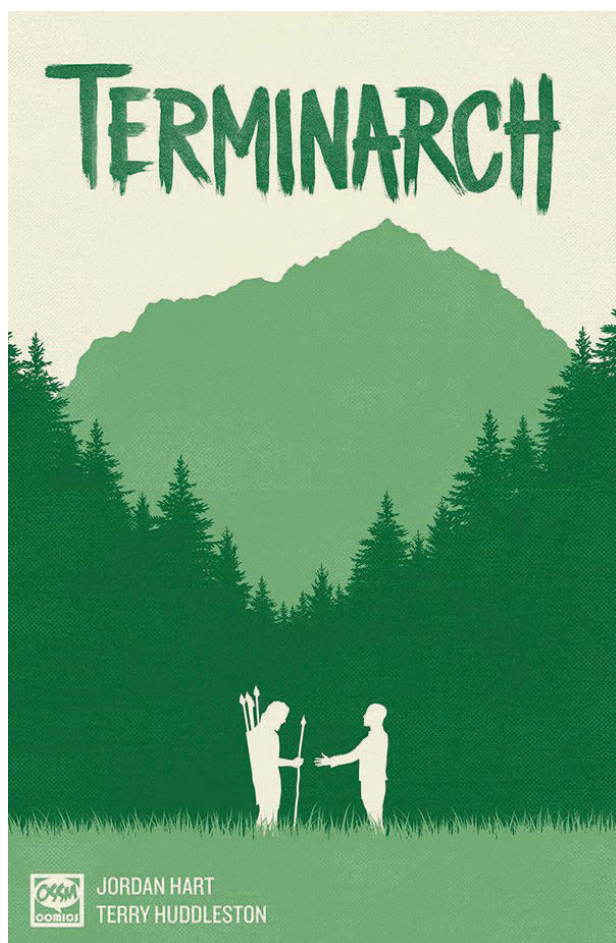


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WITH THE WINTER CHILLS SETTLING IN, WE DECIDED TO NOT BOTHER GOING OUT, PREFERRING THE COMFORT OF INDOORS AND THE NEVER-ENDING COMIC ONSLAUGHT...

**Words: MICHAEL CAMPBELL**

Michael writes about wrestling, movies, and comics. His wife is going to kill him if she ever discovers the extent of his comic book addiction.

Mark Millar's latest book for Image, *Reborn*, could not have been more hyped prior to release, thanks to the Kick-Ass scribe pairing with red-hot former Batman artist, Greg Capullo. Yet another of the publisher's high-concept sci-fi outings, *Reborn* stands apart thanks to Millar's innate ability to convey characteristics and personality within an insanely few words. You're immediately engulfed in his story, and it doesn't take much to find the central characters becoming enormously sympathetic and engaging. Capullo's art is stunning too. Issue one is bursting with wonderful background detail, while the second part really lays the table for future instalments. Worth getting on board with early!

*Terminarch* from OSSM Comics is a title that will have flown under the radar for most, but actually sold out from the distributor's site. It's a glorious high concept apocalyptic tale. If that sounds uninteresting due to the wild volume of entries into the genre, that's absolutely fair, but in this case, the end result is distinctive and thought-provoking. Jordan Hart's pitch depicts a world in which androids have slaughtered 95% of the world's population in an attempt to empower those with artistic sensibilities; the one faculty that the androids cannot harness. Into the mix comes the last non-artist alive. The blurb on the back cover actually ruins a few of the finer story points, so if you do pick it up, be sure to skip that and dive right in.

Legendary Indie creator Terry Moore finally dished out his long delayed *Motor Girl*, a book which he had repeatedly put on the back burner as other projects took priority. However, it's

more than worth the wait, and a neat departure from his most recent efforts. Moore's knack for engaging dialogue is almost without equal, and it really shines here. Female protagonist Samantha is swiftly introduced to great effect, and offers a somewhat cutesy pathway into a balance of comical UFO shenanigans, and allusions towards something a little darker.

The first issue feels a little slight and introductory, but it would be difficult to imagine anyone other than Moore achieving those things in such a cheery, immediately accessible fashion.

Over at Marvel, their *Death of X* series drew quite a combination of responses, ranging from those ready to abandon the company altogether, to people tripping over themselves with excitement. Either way, it's a noteworthy limited series that finally fills some notable gaps, telling readers the truth behind Cyclops' death. By its very nature, that's the sort of event that will always be divisive, but writers Jeff Lemire and Charles Soule show a great aptitude for adding a little spice to proceedings. The end result is a much more satisfying series than the the overall *X-Men*/*Inhumans* storyline feels, a direction which has been confounding at best.

DC finally fed Catwoman fans a puny morsel in the shape of *Catwoman: Election Night*, a middling one-shot that felt as disposable as that sounds, despite the timely attempt at relevance. A hint of morality and a lot of flashbacks give this special the feeling of being an annual of old though. That shouldn't be a bad thing, but beyond some very effective





### [COMIC OF THE MONTH]

## Violent Love

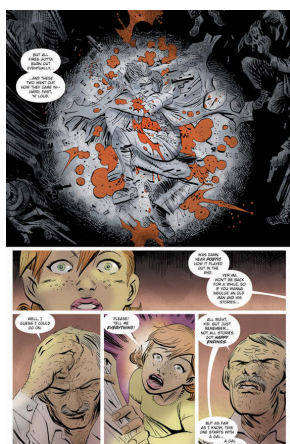
// STORY, FRANK J. BARBIERE // ART, VICTOR SANTOS  
PUBLISHER, IMAGE COMICS

The first issue of Image's Violent Love may have swiftly been snapped up by speculators, but it is a genuinely stirring piece of work that absolutely warrants the multiple printings. Santos' gorgeous artwork rests somewhere between Robert Hack's Archie work and Eric Powell's outlandish use of detail. It's dynamic, distinct and entirely appropriate for this series. Those who have enjoyed Image's Ringside series may find similarities in how the 'gangsters' are depicted, but there's a huge stylistic difference here. This is a comic that also immediately produces a cult anti-hero in the shape of Daisy Jane, establishing an engrossing revenge plot. Pulpy and reminiscent of cinema such as Bonnie & Clyde, this is terrific stuff.

## DC FINALLY FED CATWOMAN FANS A PUNY MORSEL IN THE SHAPE OF CATWOMAN: ELECTION NIGHT

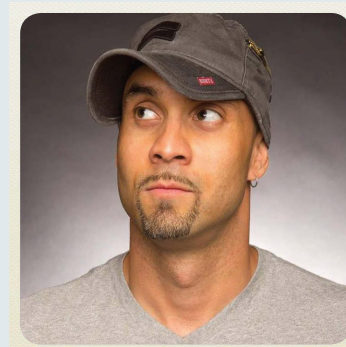
artwork by Shane Davis, there's something missing here. Still, it's far from a bad effort for those who have been starved of some cat action since her book was cancelled. The real reason for taking notice of the feline's average outing is to make note of the back-up story, a 12-page continuation of the excellent Prez series. It never quite gained the commercial success that a book with such a loyal following would hope for, but great notices and strong fan enthusiasm encouraged a reaction of horror when it was cancelled. The back-up tale here is a riot, though whether fans feel ripped off on shelling out for a secondary feature, is another matter entirely.

Titan Comics' collaboration with Hard Case Crime saw the premier of their second series, in the shape of Peepland. The art doesn't have the same ferocious impact of Triggerman, but it's still an arresting effort. With a title such as 'Peepland', it can't be hard to imagine what the subject matter is, for less naive readers at least. Basically there's crime, peep shows, strippers, clichéd cops, and rain-soaked pavements. It's yet to break out into something unique and into 'must-read' territory, but Peepland is certainly a lot of fun. **GM**



## IN THE ART SEAT

### JONBOY MEYERS, ARTIST [SPAWN, MARVEL AGE: SPIDER-MAN]



**When did your interest in comic books begin?** My interest in comics first started when my Military Police father would bring home comic books left by enlisted folks to the Police Station. There were lots of war comics. I got hooked on Unknown Solider, Creature Commandos and Sgt. Rock. It wasn't until my Dad brought home Captain America King Size Annual #4 drawn by Jack Kirby that I was really hooked.

**How do you think your work has changed over the years?** Hopefully it's gotten better. You definitely try to push yourself to stay innovative and relevant. For me it's very much trying to do work that I feel is on the same level or in the same ball park of all the guys I consider to be the 'best', guys like Arthur Adams, Joe Mad, Scott Campbell and Stuart Immonen and Jason Pearson.... to me, those guys are giants.

**One of the first major titles you worked on for Marvel featured Spider-Man. How did it feel to be handling such a key character?** I was petrified, looking back I don't think I was quite ready and I was one of two artists on the book, and the other guy was Mark Brooks, who was LIGHT YEARS ahead of me!

**Recently fans saw your work on Teen Titans. How did you approach the material?** Well I was offered the job on Teen Titans while I was working on Spawn, and I wasn't under any exclusive contract with Spawn, and DC is a much bigger universe, so I decided to make my move to DC. I re-read all the Early Wolfman/Perez stuff and the Johns/Mckone and boiled down the design sense of what worked and applied that to my work on Teen Titans. I also plotted the first arc and a small bit on Rebirth and helped with a small portion of the writing on Teen Titans as well. In the end it's all about staying true to what the concept and premise of Teen Titans is about.

**Now that you're a bit more experienced, do you feel much pressure in your mind to follow some of the classic renditions of iconic characters?** No, no pressure at all. I think though one does need to pay respect to what has come before, but when I do so, I try to put a little twist or wrinkle to it that can make it my own. I think we need to respect how readers see and interpret these characters, so how they act and move and look. They have to feel 'right' and familiar if you know what I mean... if not the book will be dead, or have a lot of negative baggage even before you get out of the gate.

**Are there any creators out there at the moment that you would be particularly keen to work with?** No one really in particular. I would love to work with anyone just as long as there's mutual respect, communication and there's a real concept of team behind the book. Same with editorial. I think a great team can accomplish anything given the right attitude and spirit of cooperation and collaboration. But you have to have the right editor who knows what they're doing and can keep a book on track and team members accountable. You have to understand that everyone is dependent on everyone else doing their job in a timely manner – other people depend on you doing your job so they can do theirs and make a living, so it's not necessarily about the WHO I would love to work with, it's more about working with people who are collaborative.



# COMIC CRITIQUE

ONCE AGAIN, WE'VE DIPPED OUR TOES INTO THE MURKY SEA OF GRAPHIC STORYTELLING, TO FOCUS ON SEVERAL BIG NEW COMICS TEMPTING YOUR STRAINING WALLET...

## Jessica Jones #1-2

STORY, BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS // ART, MICHAEL GAYDOS  
// PUBLISHER, MARVEL COMICS



Bendis' latest take on the popular Netflix character is a reset of sorts. The beginning of the first new arc sees Jones' family unit crumble, with an intriguing element of mystery. Hopefully this new direction pays off. Regardless, for now Gaydos' cinematic depictions of a moody, dour atmosphere are the big draw, though David Mack's covers are a beautiful contrast to the atmospherics within.

★★★★☆

## He-Man/Thundercats #1-2

STORY, ROB DAVID & LLOYD GOLDFINE // ART, FREDDIE WILLIAMS II // PUBLISHER, DC COMICS

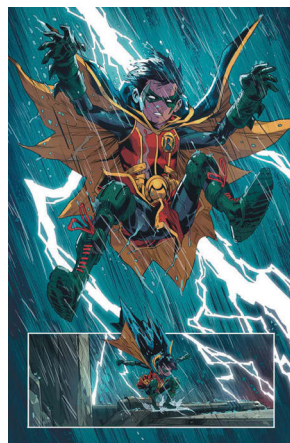


Those of us over a certain age have long held a fantasy that would see the hirsute Lion-O and hairy-pants sporting He-Man combine. Here it is, in all its brash, ridiculous, loud glory. A six-parter with great nostalgia, but it will require a jump start to offer more than being a straightforward guilty pleasure. However, the creative team is currently doing a fine job of melding the two franchises together.

★★★★☆

## Teen Titans #1-2

STORY, BENJAMIN PERCY // ART, JONBOY MEYERS/DIOIGENES NEVES // PUBLISHER, DC COMICS

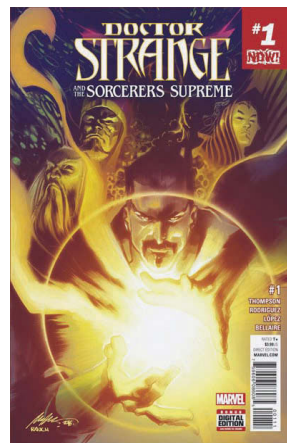


It's fair to say that the focus of the new take on Teen Titans is squarely on the Damian incarnation of Robin. But it's also superbly written and suggests a fun dynamic as the storyline progresses. Meyers' artwork is appealing and energetic, while successor Neves looks to have a similarly slick approach to the cast. Bright, breezy, and with a neat twist to the Titans concept, this is a great restart.

★★★★☆

## Doctor Strange & The Sorcerers Supreme #1-2

STORY, ROBBIE THOMPSON // ART, JAVIER RODRIQUEZ // PUBLISHER, MARVEL COMICS

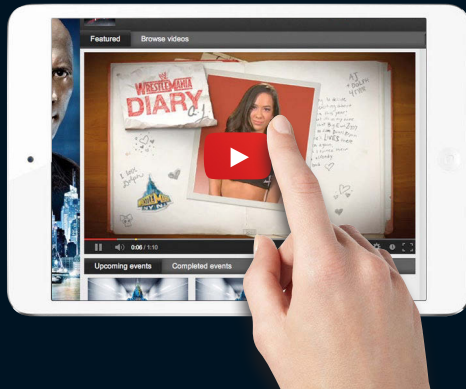


With the arrival of the witty Doctor Strange came the inevitable spin-offs. Thankfully, Thompson has nailed the persona of Strange exhibited by Cumberbatch's turn, which is consistent with the most recent relaunch. This isn't earth shattering, but certainly enjoyable enough fare. Rodriguez's artwork is good fun, but it's the offbeat ensemble that will ensure success for this title.

★★★★☆



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## MANIAC MINER

**NAME** ISAAC CLARKE // **FIRST APPEARANCE** DEAD SPACE [24 OCTOBER 2008]



Originally part of the emergency response team that went to the USG Ishimura to sort out the ship's problems, Isaac Clarke became the sole survivor after the second Aegis VII incident.







# DEAD SPACE'S ISAAC CLARKE

**GIVE IT UP FOR THE TORTURED STAR OF THE BEST HORROR GAME FROM 2008...**

Words: SEBASTIAN WILLIAMSON

Back in 2007 Electronic Arts announced that its California-based studio, Redwood Shores, was hard at work crafting a brand new third-person horror title called Dead Space. It was a pretty daring move from the publisher given that the studio was primarily responsible for cooking up games based on existing IPs such as The Godfather and The Simpsons.

The gamble paid off when one year later the game hit shelves to critical acclaim, selling over two million copies and bringing with it one of the most iconic leading men in pixelated terror – Isaac Clarke, a ship systems engineer faced with battling unimaginable horrors aboard the marooned USG Ishimura in the year 2508.

Once aboard the ship Clarke and his cohorts quickly discover that the crew, originally presumed missing, have been transformed into twisted creatures of the night known as Necromorphs, and must battle to get its system back online while trying to find his missing girlfriend and crewmember, Nicole.

What's interesting about Isaac is that during the first game he was an entirely non-speaking character, with the exception of a handful of grunts, groans and screams he'd make throughout the course of the campaign. However, and probably due to the fact that the development team realised they'd created a star in the pantheon of horror characters, he developed a voice and a much more fleshed out personality for the sequel.

Of course, said personality came with a price, a price that really drove the narrative of the sequel forward – hallucinations, dementia and a horrifying connection to the mysterious Marker, a divine relic he discovered in the first game responsible for transforming the crew of the Ishimura into the monstrous beasts that stalked the pitch black corridors of the doomed ship.

In the third and final Dead Space instalment the team made a few tweaks that fans balked at, which ultimately resulted in less than stellar sales and reviews. Isaac transitioned from being a deeply tortured character to some daft action hero more akin to John McClane. Gone was the terror of the first and second game and in its place remained a more gung-ho deep space shooter that opted to forgo frights in favour of co-op gameplay and, worst of all, horrifying micro transactions introduced as a way to encourage lazy, cash flushed players to circumvent the game's rather nifty weapons crafting system in favour of a quick fix.

Mishaps aside, we're hoping that the team decide to resurrect Isaac for the current generation of consoles and try to recapture the sheer terror that first, and best, game crafted with aplomb back in 2008. **GM**

## DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

An iconic engineer suit equipped with holographic rig, stasis and kinesis modes, as well as an array of kick-ass weaponry including the devastating 211-v plasma cutter, a tool perfect for making necromorph chop suey.

## WHERE IS HE NOW?

Check out Isaac in the three Dead Space games available on last gen consoles, because it may be some time before EA and the development team figure out a way to bring him back.



“GOOD MEN MEAN WELL. WE JUST  
DON’T ALWAYS END UP DOING WELL”

**ISAAC CLARKE, DEAD SPACE**







**COSPLAYER // STEVEN K SMITH**

Otherwise known as SKS Props, Steven K Smith makes his living as a premier cosplay artist and prop maker in Kansas City, Missouri. Steven is known worldwide for his skill in bringing videogames to life through cosplay. He has been recognised by and worked with videogame powerhouses EA, Microsoft, BioWare, Bungie, Gearbox and 2K Games. One of his latest creations was an Inquisitor armor set from the hit RPG Dragon Age Inquisition. It was so embraced by the community that it was flown to Norway and used in world renowned violinist Lindsey Stirling's official Dragon Age music video.

**LOVES** PROP AND COSTUME BUILDING, GAMING

**DISLIKES** NEGATIVITY

# DEAD SPACE

STEVEN K SMITH PROPS





"A BIT OF BREAKING NEWS. A LOCAL FAMILY IS FORCED OUT OF THEIR HOME BY GHOSTS. WHO ARE THEY GONNA CALL?"

TOM TUCKER

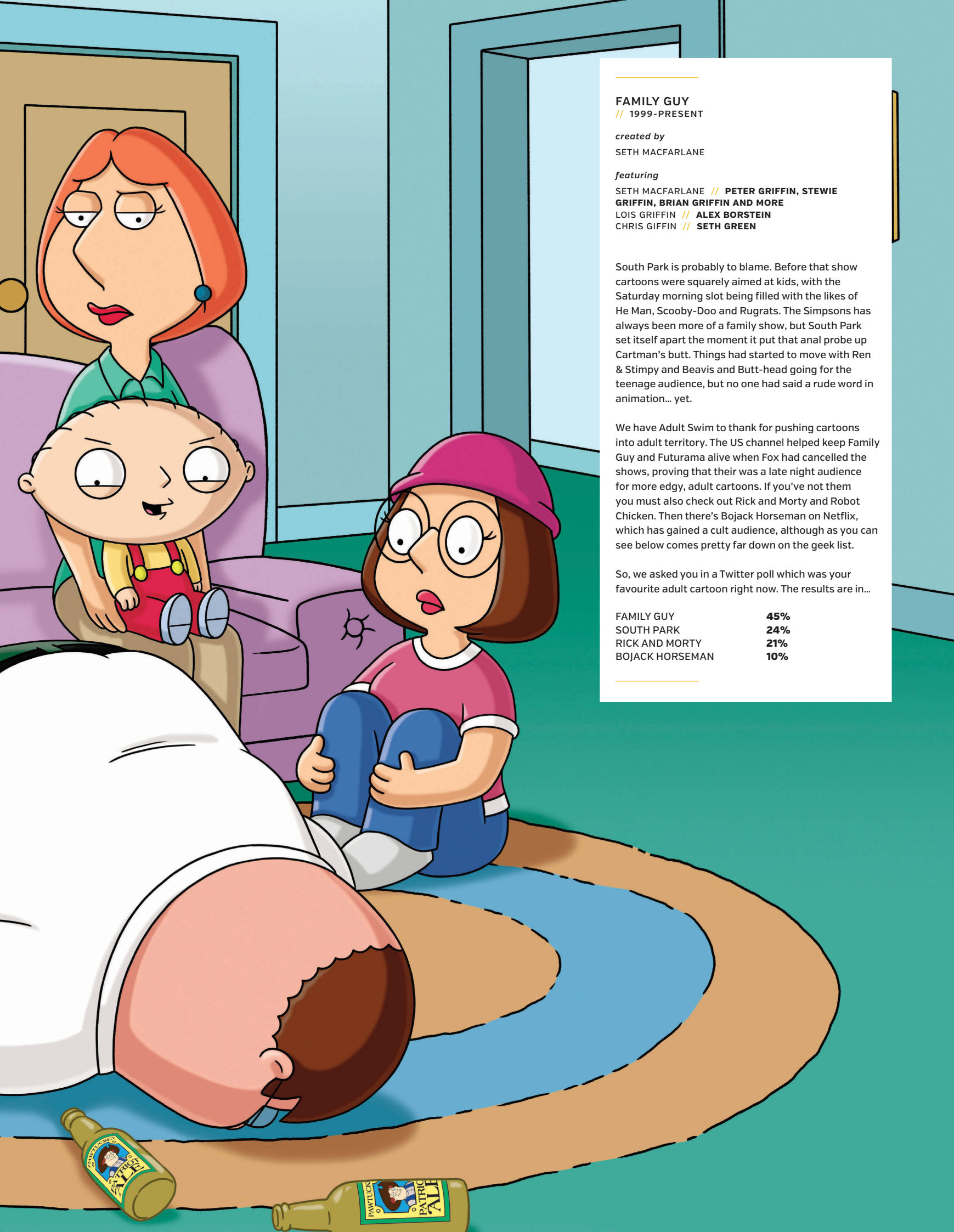
"[SIGHS]: GHOSTBUSTERS, TOM?"

DIANE SIMMONS

"NO, DIANE. THEIR INSURANCE COMPANY. THAT'S JUST STUPID WHAT YOU SAID."

TOM TUCKER





## FAMILY GUY

// 1999-PRESENT

created by  
SETH MACFARLANE

featuring  
SETH MACFARLANE // **PETER GRIFFIN, STEWIE GRIFFIN, BRIAN GRIFFIN AND MORE**  
LOIS GRIFFIN // **ALEX BORSTEIN**  
CHRIS GIFFIN // **SETH GREEN**

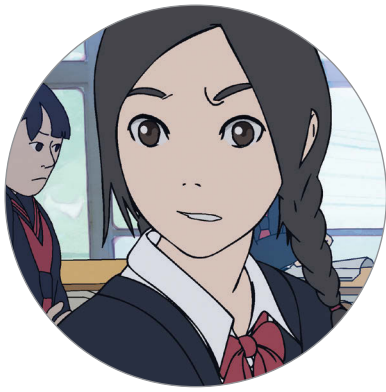
South Park is probably to blame. Before that show cartoons were squarely aimed at kids, with the Saturday morning slot being filled with the likes of He Man, Scooby-Doo and Rugrats. The Simpsons has always been more of a family show, but South Park set itself apart the moment it put that anal probe up Cartman's butt. Things had started to move with Ren & Stimpy and Beavis and Butt-head going for the teenage audience, but no one had said a rude word in animation... yet.

We have Adult Swim to thank for pushing cartoons into adult territory. The US channel helped keep Family Guy and Futurama alive when Fox had cancelled the shows, proving that there was a late night audience for more edgy, adult cartoons. If you've not seen them you must also check out Rick and Morty and Robot Chicken. Then there's Bojack Horseman on Netflix, which has gained a cult audience, although as you can see below comes pretty far down on the geek list.

So, we asked you in a Twitter poll which was your favourite adult cartoon right now. The results are in...

FAMILY GUY	<b>45%</b>
SOUTH PARK	<b>24%</b>
RICK AND MORTY	<b>21%</b>
BOJACK HORSEMAN	<b>10%</b>





# BECAUSE JAPAN

Words: JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan is the author of *Anime: A History and Modern Japan: All That Matters*



## The Kindness of Strangers

SHUNJI IWAI'S PAIR OF PERVERTS

Tetsuko 'Alice' Arisugawa (Yu Aoi) is a writer's daughter, cursed with an overactive imagination. Shunted into a new school by her parents' divorce, she finds the perfect foil in local truant Hana Arai (Anne Suzuki), a pathological liar who eggs her on into wild conspiracy theories, breathless scandal-mongering and a series of misadventures that grow hilariously out of hand.

A decade after his early success with *Hana & Alice*, a live-action comedy about two hyper-active schoolgirls who dupe a boy with amnesia, director Shunji Iwai decided to revisit his characters with a prequel about a fateful day that saw them stranded in Tokyo and inadvertently starting a missing-persons hunt. The film's title, *The Case of Hana & Alice*, makes it sound like some bloodthirsty murder investigation, a fitting evocation of the leads' compulsion to read melodrama into everyday situations.

"The thing is," Iwai laughs, "you can get away with a lot more when you're a girl. Look at Hana and Alice and the way they behave. In the first movie, they were basically stalkers, telling that poor boy that they had a past together. In this prequel, they are causing all this trouble around the city. They're kind of... how can I put this? They're perverts. If I made that story about a man, if I made it about you, for instance, then you'd be locked up."

It would also have been impossibly expensive as live-action. It wasn't just a case of redressing Tokyo to look like it was 2004 – the film's plot demands an absence of social media, as many of its escalating misunderstandings could be halted today by 20 seconds' Googling. But the original film made stars of its leading ladies, who were not only now out of Iwai's price range, but pushing 30 and unconvincing as middle-schoolers. Iwai hit on a solution inspired by the films of Ralph Bakshi. He shot the entire film on the run in 30 days, using teenage stand-ins for the stars, and then painting over every frame to make it look like an animated film.





After the guerrilla film-making was done, the touch-up was outsourced to 150 freelancers all around Japan. Iwai denies that he ran the whole post-production process without having to get out of bed, but one can easily imagine him pottering around his living room in a dressing gown, watching as digitised packets flow in and out of his server. The expensive leads were lured back for a single day to record just the voices; their younger onscreen selves moved and emoted like the teens they really were, and digital effects fixed the lighting and scrubbed out buildings and technology that did not exist a decade ago. The result might look on the surface like an animated film, but the use of live actors delivers huge amounts of nuanced data – flinches, tics and micro-expressions that would simply never happen in a cartoon.

The real charm of *The Case of Hana & Alice* is the compassion that suffuses the film. Two clueless kids, poised on the cusp of adulthood, go AWOL overnight in a big city, but are kept safe by the good deeds of the people they meet, from the taxi driver who waives an unaffordable fare, to the indulgent strangers who put up with their histrionics. There's not a dark moment in a film that is as confident about its leads' right to be silly as it is about the surety that all will be well in the end. The Japanese, unsurprisingly, have a word for it: *omotenashi*, or kindness for the sake of kindness.

*The Case of Hana & Alice* is also a winning portrayal of the slippery relationship that teens have with the truth, although Iwai himself says the original inspiration came from somewhere much closer to home. "When I started working in the film industry, I was astonished at how many of the people there were bare-faced liars. There are an awful lot of them, like half! It's very surreal, and that provided a lot of material for Hana." **GM**

**The Case of Hana & Alice is released on UK blu-ray and DVD 9 January by Anime Ltd.**



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## HAVE A BREAK...

One of the weirder moments in *The Case of Hana & Alice* is a 32-second shot of a giant Kit-Kat. But Iwai denies it's there solely to please his sponsors at Nestlé. "Nestlé actually wanted it to be far more discreet, but we had a scene that called for chocolate, which had a lot of backstory narration on top of it, and it's not like we could have used a rival brand, so it had to be a Kit-Kat. Nestlé wanted to know why it was onscreen for so long, but it was actually necessary for the story. On some films, like *The Bride of Rip van Winkle*, I'll have a sponsor like Alfa Romeo pushing to be onscreen more, but Nestlé actually tried to get me to be less obvious."

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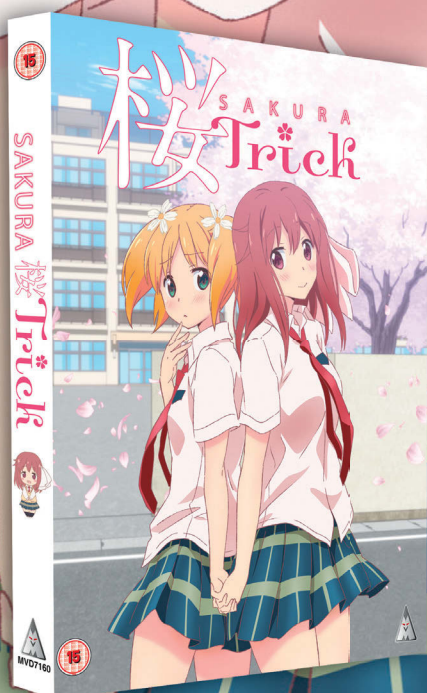
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# GET THIS

NEW YEAR, NEW GEEK SHED NEEDED TO STORE ALL THE AMAZING COLLECTABLES YOU WILL WANT. WE SAY, "GET THIS..."

## LEGO Ghostbusters Firehouse Headquarters

£275 // [LEGO.COM](#)

Whether you're going to build it with your (or someone else's) kids, or you're a fully paid up member of AFOL (Adult Fans of LEGO), the most impressive set we've seen for a long time is this Ghostbusters Firehouse HQ. Modelled on the Hook & Ladder building in New York where the Ghostbusters team set up shop in the first movie (and is currently being renovated, so don't bother visiting like our Ed, Ghostbusters fact fans) this is a whopping 4,634 LEGO bricks with nine minifigures, complete with proton packs, ghost traps and a tiny green LEGO Slimer. The building opens up to reveal all the rooms, and the pole to slide down. Excellent.



## Star Wars Darth Vader Talking Cookie Jar

£25 // [AMAZON](#)

Want a constant reminder that those cookies will be bad for your waistline? How about having Darth Vader menacingly breathing down your neck when you open up the cookie jar? Those clever bods at Underground Toys have been at it again with Lucasfilm. The sound effect comes direct from the movie, the only thing that lets it down is a few more samples would have been good, rather than just breathing!



## Terminator 2: Judgment Day Hunter Killer Aerial

£TBC // [NECAONLINE.COM](#)

Over in the States, NECA is the King of movie collectables, and they are gearing up for the launch of their Cinemachines range in April. These are die-cast metal vehicles with incredible detailing, and each comes mounted on a display plinth. We checked out the Hunter Killer Aerial from Terminator 2: Judgment Day. These were menacing as hell in the movie, and the articulated cannon still looks badass today.

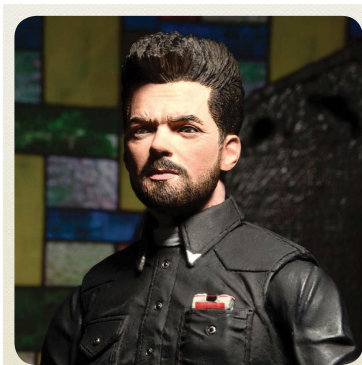


## The Rocketeer Stunt Rocket Pack

\$20,000 (£15,754) // [AMAZON](#)

Could this be the most expensive item we have ever featured in Geeky Monkey? Probably, and it's here to highlight to you that Amazon has a fantastic collection of movie and TV memorabilia for you to sift through. It's like a jumble sale of props, costumes and trinkets, and is well worth checking out if you're a serious collector. This stunt rocket from The Rocketeer was used in filming and is made of fiberglass.





## Preacher Jesse and Cassidy action figures

£1,450 // NECAONLINE.COM

From Vertigo comic to AMC TV series to NECA action figure range, Jesse and Cassidy have certainly been busy. NECA has been working with actors Dominic Cooper and Joseph Gilgun to make these figures an 'authorised likeness'. In our opinion Cooper should be over the moon with his, but Gilgun should have probably put down the beer bottle and taken a closer look – this looks nothing like him! Still, the 6 3/4 inch figures are fully poseable and come with unique accessories for their character. Jesse has a bible, the coffee can that holds his biblical power and some beer, while Cassidy adds a bottle of whisky. These are available from February.



## Doctor Who K-9 Life Size Cardboard Cutout

\$25 (£20) // OLDIES.COM

One way to keep the cost of collecting TV merchandise down is to do away with replicas of the real thing and instead plump for cardboard cut outs! This K-9 model really looks the business, and up on your geek shelf from a distance could be mistaken for the real deal, only it's made of cardboard by company Advanced Graphics. Now just to find a K-9 sound effect key fob to go with it...



## Star Wars Episode VII RC Millennium Falcon

£21 // MERCHANDISINGPLAZA.CO.UK

The Chinese factories must be busy the year around, churning out Star Wars merchandise by the skip load. While there are quality pieces to enjoy and collect, it's always worth looking in the bargain bins to see what the kids today are getting excited about. How about this RC Millennium Falcon. "Great!" you think, only this doesn't fly as you would imagine, it trundles along the ground. Oh dear.



## PlayStation 4 20th Anniversary Edition Controller

£60 // FUNSTOCKRETRO.CO.UK

The PlayStation celebrated its 20th birthday back in 2014, and to commemorate this a limited number of special PS4 joypads were created using the colours and styling of the original joypad. This pad has long been discontinued, but Funstock has a bunch available on their website. The pad has everything the regular PS4 pad does – touch pad, light bar, share button, but you will turn heads when you play multiplayer with this.



# UD-4L CHEYENNE DROPSHIP

“WE’RE ON AN EXPRESS ELEVATOR TO HELL! GOING DOWN!” FLY THE FRIENDLY SKIES WITH THE COLONIAL MARINES DROPSHIP FROM JAMES CAMERON’S ALIENS

They might be a bunch of macho posturing clichés, but you have to feel sorry for the Colonial Marines. They start off looking so tough, capable and confident, and within a few short and violent hours they’re reduced to tattered and whimpering wreckage: “Game over, man! Game over!”

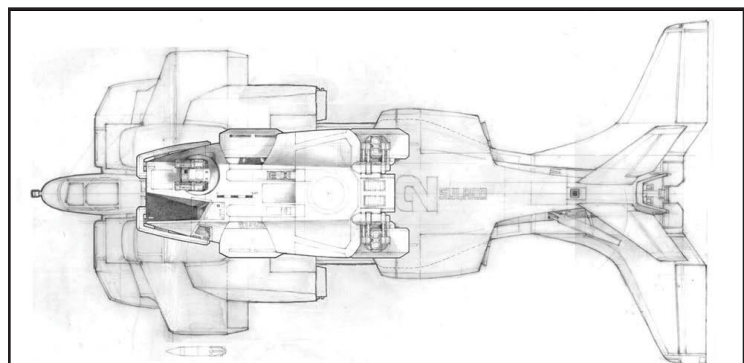
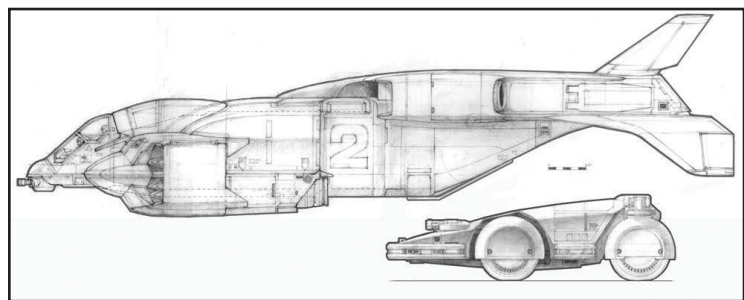
It’s not hard to see why they’re so pumped up before their ill-fated mission to take on the Xenomorphs of LV-426; they’re tooled up with some of the coolest and most iconic futuristic military hardware ever to grace a sci-fi film. They each have the wicked-looking M41A Pulse Rifle with its LED ammo counter (to let you know how short of bullets you’re getting); the indomitable Vasquez wields a Steadicam-harness mounted M56 Smartgun painted with the word ‘Adios’; they drive around in the tank-like M577 Armoured Personnel Carrier, with its swiveling turret and twin 20mm cannons; and above all they rock up to the fight in the UD-4L Cheyenne Dropship. Part spaceship, part assault gunship, armed to the teeth and totally badass. If you need to get troops on the ground in a hurry this baby can drop an APC full of marines right into the hot zone from orbit. If you’re really lucky, it might even be able to pick up what’s left afterward...

James Cameron is a director who has always favoured practical effects and real props, and when he signed on to direct the 1986 sequel to Ridley Scott’s 1979 sci-fi horror classic *Alien*, he brought with him a distinctive vision for the way the film should look. He hired veteran science fiction film designers Syd Mead (*Blade Runner*, *Star Trek: TMP*, 2010) and Ron Cobb (*Star Wars*, *Alien*) to design the ships and vehicles, with the instruction that they should base their concepts on real military hardware from the Vietnam war era. However, when it came to the look of the Cheyenne dropship he just wasn’t satisfied with their designs. Always ready to get his hands dirty, Cameron built his own model of the dropship out of foam-core board and plastic model parts, incorporating design elements from the F4 Phantom jet fighter (notably the shape of the tail plane and the jet intakes) and the cockpit from a Bell AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter. Ron Cobb made detailed drawings based on Cameron’s design, and these were used to construct the full-sized set and the special effects shooting models.

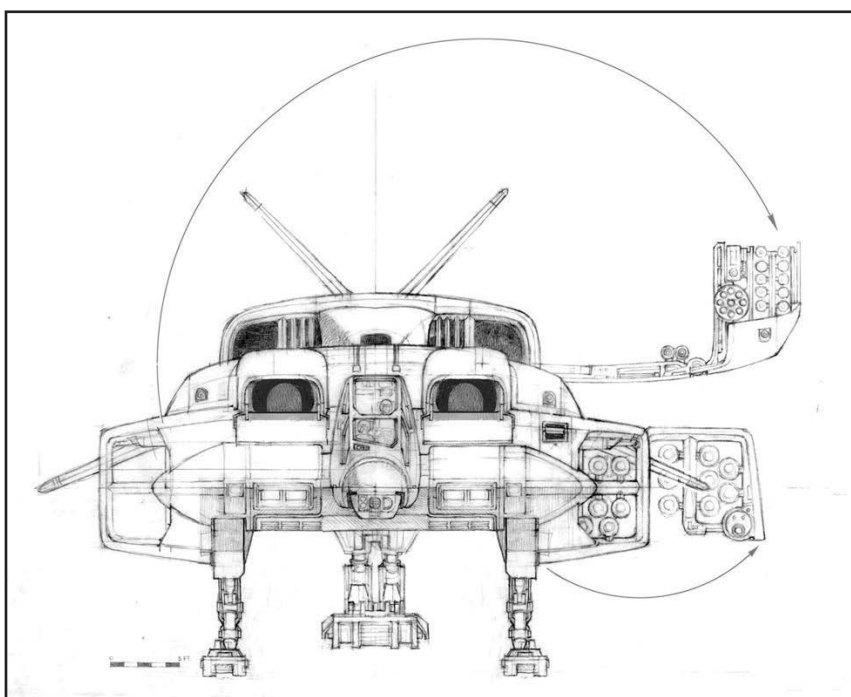
The full-sized Cheyenne mock-up used to shoot the hanger scenes was something to behold. It was over ten metres long, built out of an aluminium shell over a wooden frame, and used parts from some real military aircraft. Since the film was shot mostly at Pinewood Studios in England, these included the landing gear from a British Avro Vulcan bomber and the flare trays from an English Electric Canberra. Following Cameron’s original design, the actual jet intakes from an F4 Phantom were also used.

Other scale models were made from the original drawings, included two-metre-long shooting models suspended from wire flying rigs which were hidden in-camera using the rain and fog effects.

All of this hard work certainly paid off. Not only is *Aliens* widely regarded as one of the most enduringly great sci-fi action films of all time, it went on to win a string of awards, including Academy Awards in 1986 for Sound Effects editing and for Visual Effects. It also won a BAFTA for visual effects, and eight Saturn awards including best special effects. **GM**







**ALWAYS  
READY TO  
GET HIS  
HANDS DIRTY,  
CAMERON  
BUILT HIS  
OWN MODEL  
OF THE  
DROPSHIP  
OUT OF FOAM-  
CORE BOARD  
AND PLASTIC  
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#### **UNDER THE HOOD**

According to the Alien franchise fan Wiki Xenopedia, the Colonial Marines UD-4L Cheyenne Dropship is 25.18m long, 15.3m wide with its rocket pods deployed, and has a maximum loaded weight of 34,630kg. It can hit a maximum speed of Mach 12 with its booster ram-rockets, and can carry up to 60 passengers or a fully-equipped US Colonial Marines squad in an M577 Armoured Personnel Carrier, which can be rapidly deployed from its central loading ramp. It's armed with up to 65 rockets and guided missiles in multiple configurations, as well as a nose-turret mounted 25mm Gatling cannon.



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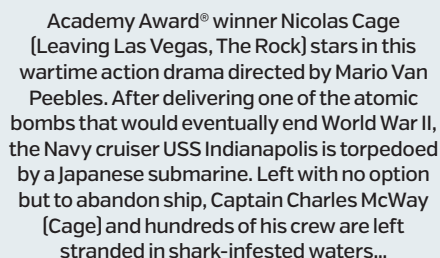
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And all because the Führer loves to watch films in his basement cinema, Joe Blake should be dead by now really, as both sides are out to get him.



[TV]

## The Man In The High Castle: Season 2

CREATED BY FRANK SPOTNITZ // STARRING RUFUS SEWELL, ALEXA DAVALOS, RUPERT EVANS  
// CHANNEL, AMAZON PRIME VIDEO

Philip K Dick could certainly write a good alternate reality tale, and *The Man In The High Castle* was one of his best books. It's incredible that it took over 50 years to bring the story to the screen but Amazon Prime Video's adaptation has been superb, even if the series chose not to stick rigidly to the text. If you're yet to enjoy season one, you must stop reading now and put that right.

The 1962 reality where the Nazis and Japanese won World War II is vividly brought to life, while there's an unexplained alternative outcome to the war portrayed in dusty reel-to-reel films showing the Allies winning, or our reality as we like to call it. The ten episodes created a chilling suspense thriller where multiple story threads came to a crescendo brilliantly, and should have left you desperate for more.

Season two is streaming on Amazon Prime now, and this time we're going to see much more of Adolf, with his white hair and matching moustache, along with an obvious onset of Parkinson's disease as he shakes uncontrollably when accepting one of the films. Hitler is living in a castle high up above Berlin, but that does not mean he is 'The Man'. In his frailty he has become obsessed with the future visions seen in the films, some of which seem to show San Francisco as a nuclear wasteland after having an A-bomb dropped on it.

We left Joe Blake heading for Mexico on a boat and Juliana Crain in big trouble with the American Resistance for letting the Nazi agent go. Without spoiling the show too much, by the end of episode one everything has switched around a few times more, just as you think you know who the good and bad guys are, everything is turned on its head. And that's where *The Man In The High Castle* grips you, keeping you dangling in suspense for another ten episodes.

### THIS TIME WE'RE GOING TO SEE MUCH MORE OF ADOLF, WITH HIS WHITE HAIR

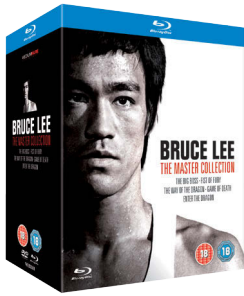
Asked about how season two differs from one, Producer David W Zuker said, "There was a ton of world building as we got oriented to what this alternative history was in season one. I think as we go deeper into characters in season two, we start seeing how individually and collectively they begin to significantly impact the world in which they are living, and the future that may be forthcoming."

One of the most interesting characters is that of Obergruppenführer John Smith, played by Rufus Sewell. Asked about returning to the character Sewell said, "At the end of the first season he was left very close to the top of the ladder within the Reich, whilst at the same time the Reich was on the verge of devouring his family. This is someone who actually did this, he believes, to protect his family. So that journey kind of continues upwards in terms of his career and his standing within the Nazi party and downwards in terms of the very thing he was trying to protect. Those two stories run counter to each other with him."

With Joe returning to Berlin a hero for retrieving the film, Frank Frink trying to make sense of seeing his own execution on the screen and Trade Minister Tagomi choosing to spend more time in the alternate reality he has discovered, there's plenty more suspense to come. **GM**

☆☆☆☆☆



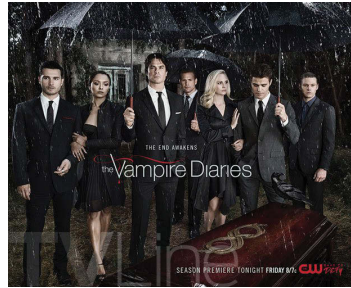


**[BOX SET]**  
**Bruce Lee: The Master Collection**

£60 // STARRING, BRUCE LEE  
// STUDIO, MEDIUMRARE ENTERTAINMENT

It was tragic that Hong Kong martial arts movie star Bruce Lee died at the age of 32 in 1973. Mediumrare is celebrating his five movies with this superb box set that has been restored to 4K resolution from the original movie negatives. In the box you get *The Big Boss*, *Fist of Fury*, *The Way of the Dragon*, *Enter the Dragon* and *Game of Death*. There are 12 hours of extras too, including a DVD with two documentaries. There is no finer collection of Bruce Lee's career, an essential purchase for fans.

★★★★★



**[TV]**  
**The Vampire Diaries: Season 8**

CHANNEL, ITV2 // STARRING, PAUL WESLEY, KAT GRAHAM // STUDIO, THE CW

The *Vampire Diaries* will finally come to an end with its currently airing eighth season, two seasons later than most expected after star Nina Dobrev was written out of the show in 2015. As a series that has always relished being part soap opera and now has nothing to lose, it's wringing out every last drop of drama using every story device they spent seven action-packed seasons building in. Expect marriages, deaths and the return of long-absent characters in what should be an emotional finale.

★★★★★



**[BOOK]**  
**Batman: A Celebration of the Classic TV Series**

£22 // AUTHOR, BOB GARCIA, JOE DESRIS  
// PUBLISHER, TITAN BOOKS

Titan has added another book about the fun, technicolor 1960s *Batman* TV series to their growing library on the subject. It's been a busy year for the beloved old kids' show, with a 'brand new' animated feature based on the incarnation in shops too. Packed with behind the scenes photos, stories from the cast and crew plus Bat trivia that even hardcore fans may find they didn't know, the book and DVD are a great way to educate the kids today about the original (and best?) *Batman* and Robin.

★★★★★

**[FILM]**  
**Allied**

STARRING, BRAD PITT, MARION COTILLARD  
// DIRECTOR, ROBERT ZEMECKIS // STUDIO, PARAMOUNT

Robert Zemeckis has had a prolific career to date, crafting some of the most memorable blockbusters of our time, including the gong-grabbing *Forest Gump*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and, more importantly to us geeks, *Back To The Future*, the Chicago born helmer's crowning achievement in celluloid.

Enter *Allied*, a love letter to Hollywood that lacks the spark and charm of his past work thanks to a wooden performance from leading man, Pitt. Cotillard, on the other hand, delivers the goods despite the wobbly material that shines a light on two star-crossed lovers embarking on a dangerous mission in *Casablanca* before falling in love and returning to London where her allegiance is brought into question. Is she who she says she is? Or is she hiding a dark secret?

Naturally, all is answered in the Steven Knight's script that pitches us as an audience a pretty damn captivating concept, but fumbles the ball in so many respects its hard to know where to begin. Putting aside the dud lead, characters are undercooked; Zemeckis direction lacks the kind of pizzazz he showed with 2015's *The Walk* or the superb air crash drama, *Flight*, back in 2012, and the ending falls flat on its face. On the upside it does look nice, so expect this one to wind up with a crazy awards season.

★★★★★



This World War II thriller is sadly let down by the cast, not so much as a sizzle between Cotillard and Pitt.





## [AUDIO BOOK] Torchwood Outbreak

£20 // DIRECTOR, SCOTT HANDCOCK  
// PUBLISHER, BIG FINISH PRODUCTIONS

Exclusively available to buy from Big Finish until it goes on more general release in late January, this fresh outing for Captain Jack, Gwen and company (including – possible spoiler – Ianto, back from the dead for good) is produced by Dr Who stalwart James Goss, and continues the revived audio adventures of The Doctor's shady comrades in alien disparagement. It's a standalone three-parter, with a new adventure expected in January, and is more than the zombie plague narrative it sounds like in synopsis. However, the Torchwood team are faced with an outbreak of infected humans in Cardiff, and somehow the government is covering up the real cause of the contagious disease – which has alien roots. Barrowman and the cast are given a certain amount of light to mingle with the shade, and we recommend the trio of episodes warmly to Torchwood hardcore. However, some Torchwood stories can often stand alone, appealing to those not keyed in to the series, and maybe this isn't quite that essential a listen.

☆☆☆☆



## [BLU-RAY] Star Trek Beyond

£15 // STARRING, CHRIS PINE, ANTON YELCHIN  
// STUDIO, UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Star Trek Beyond was one of the most satisfying films of 2016, really capturing the essence of what made the original Star Trek TV series such a success all those decades ago. The heart of the film in a great performance by Chris Pine as Kirk, he really has made the role his own, sadly it's hard to say the same about Zachary Quinto as Spock. Leonard Nimmo was so wonderful in the role that it's just too hard and act to follow I guess. This blu-ray release has got plenty to get Star Trek fans excited. The set holds two deleted scenes, a look at director Justin Lin's love of the franchise, the development of the script and story, Kalara's character, the separation of the characters during the film, a look at principal villain Krall, the Yorktown base, the production design, new aliens, a look at the movie series and Trek's legacy, remembering Leonard Nimoy and Anton Yelchin and a gag reel. Phew, that lot will bring you many hours of quality Star Trek view time, well worth the £15.

☆☆☆☆



## [BLU-RAY] The Incredible Hulk: The Complete Collection

£113 // STUDIO, FABULOUS

The camp, raw and – be honest – slightly embarrassing Hulk TV series from the late 1970s is mainly worth watching just for the spectacle of Bill Bixby's flared trousers, but for every single episode (plus a couple of the feature-length specials), £16 is a great price, on DVD. If you could ever even consider paying over £100 to own the show on Blu-Ray, however, you deserve for an angry green Lou Ferrigno to pay you a visit and rearrange your furniture around your head.

☆☆☆☆

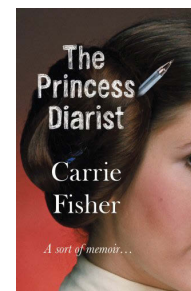


## [FILM] Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them

// STUDIO, WARNER BROS

Yes, the internet is full of controversy over whether or not JK Rowling should be increasing her bank balance with even more Harry Potter shenanigans, but the fact is that we need big, fantasy, blockbuster movies, and the world she created is one that many fans want to spend more time in. This one takes us back to 1926 New York, rather than the present day with added dragons, and while the movie has special effects to spare, it doesn't quite capture the magic of the originals.

☆☆☆☆



## [BOOK] The Princess Diarist

AUTHOR, CARRIE FISHER // PUBLISHER, BANTAM PRESS

If you're looking for an all encompassing behind the scenes account of the Star Wars saga then you'll be sorely disappointed with this tome. Instead the book – spurred into inception after Carrie reportedly uncovered diaries written at the time – spends most of the page count zoning in on her affair with Harrison Ford despite the fact he was married at the time. Ultimately what you get is a fun, yet sombre read that shines a light on an actress still struggling with her demons.

☆☆☆☆





## [PODCAST]

### Radio Free Skaro: Doctor Who

// HOSTS, STEVEN SCHAPANSKY, WARREN FREY, CHRIS BURGESS // WEBSITE, RADIOFREESKARO.COM

Radio Free Skaro recently celebrated a decade of “irreverent but never irrelevant” intense Doctor Who discussion. It began after the second series of the revived Who as Skype-facilitated chats between fan friends Steven Schapansky and Warren Frey. Schapansky has a ‘radio friendly’ voice and has proven an adept coordinator. Frey takes the role of the curmudgeonly, entitled fan that hates McCoy, loves the new show (with caveats: we’re looking at you The End of Time) and loves his action figures (or ‘space dollies’). A year into the run – which mainly consisted of the pair chatting about the latest episode, then recalling their favourites from the old show – the duo were joined by third host Chris Burgess. Each episode consists of a chatty focus on news followed by either a show commentary, an installment of Fluid Links (listener questions), a Miniscope (creative profiles), star interview or recent convention Q&A. With natural interplay between the hosts, this is the most accessible and enjoyable Doctor Who podcast out there.

☆☆☆☆☆



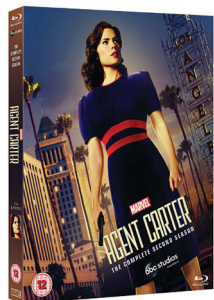
## [GAME]

### Watch Dogs 2

£42 // PC, PS4, XB1  
PUBLISHER, UBISOFT

The first Watch Dogs was a crushing disappointment. It promised us the world and failed miserably. Thankfully the sequel rights many wrongs with its blend of action, stealth and hacking. It might not yet have reached the same dizzying heights of brilliance as GTA, but the developers have done a damn good job of course-correcting the franchise, especially on the protagonist. The original’s leading man, Aiden Pearce, was a bore; here we play Marcus, a San Francisco based hacker who eschews the revenge motif planted in the first game in favour of a more philosophical approach to his digital crimes. The switch doesn’t always deliver and the narrative is a bit daft, but there’s still so much to do here that you quickly forgive these minor faults and delve deep into the thrilling missions that blend hacking, shooting and driving with bombastic aplomb. Stealth fans will be happy to know that you can make your way through most of the game without whacking a single person, but you’ll need to be on your A game for that.

☆☆☆☆☆



## [BLU-RAY]

### Marvel’s Agent Carter: Season 2

£20 // STARRING, HAYLEY ATWELL  
STUDIO, WALT DISNEY

As Agent Peggy Carter (Hayley Atwell) navigates her way through dangerous investigations and the stereotyped expectations of the 40s, she always seems to break barriers regardless. Marvel’s Agent Carter was a welcome change to the usual super hero TV show format. Season two sees Carter head for Hollywood as she faces new threats and a potential love triangle. It’s a shame the series was cancelled as this second season feels like Atwell is just about finding her feet.

☆☆☆☆☆



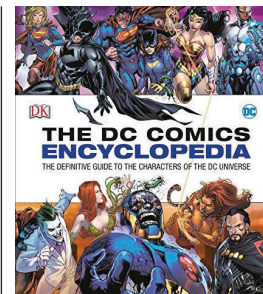
## [GAME]

### Final Fantasy XI

£40 // PS4, XB1  
PUBLISHER, SQUARE ENIX

It’s hard to believe that Final Fantasy XV was announced ten years ago. Since then it’s gone through a swathe of alterations, so it’s no surprise that despite being a brilliant and stunning looking title that pushes your console’s power to the edge, it’s got a few scars left over from its tumultuous development cycle. It does have a brand new, fast-paced combat system though, as well as a world teeming with side missions and sights to see. This is a welcome return to form for the series.

☆☆☆☆☆



## [BOOK]

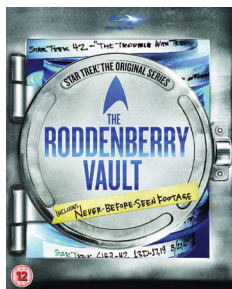
### The DC Comics Encyclopedia All-New Edition

£30 // WRITER, DC COMICS  
// PUBLISHER, DK

DK always does an excellent job of their comic book encyclopedias and this updated edition of the DC roster of characters now has over 1,200 heroes and villains. The text and design is aimed more at the teenage market than hardened comic book fans in their forties, but there’s just so much packed into every page, anyone will enjoy the lively layouts and fascinating facts. Our advice would be to shop around for this one though, while DK has an RRP of £30, Amazon is showing retailers selling it for £13.

☆☆☆☆☆





**[BLU-RAY]**  
**Star Trek: The Original Series  
– The Roddenberry Vault**

£20 // STUDIO, PARAMOUNT

The Roddenberry Vault gives fans of the franchise a golden opportunity to view never-before seen footage held by the Roddenberry estate. With alternate takes, deleted scenes, outtakes and original special effects included it gives viewers a look at unseen jewels from the earliest days of the Star Trek series. Including 12 classic episodes with newly installed mono soundtracks and isolated music, the three disc set includes documentaries which bring together all of these new vault materials.

★★★★★

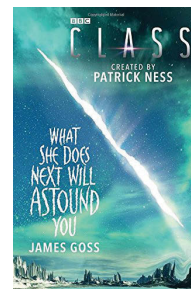


**[GAME]**  
**The Last Guardian**

£44 // STUDIO, SONY

After nine years stuck in development hell the wait is finally over for fans of Fumita Ueda's tale of a boy and his pet monster. Has it been worth it? Absolutely. The game, a touching fable crafted with same elegance as games such as ICO and Shadow of the Colossus, may not be to the taste of today's modern gamers, but we urge you to put down that gun for a moment and delve deep into this masterclass of game design and storytelling. You won't be disappointed, it's a thing of beauty.

★★★★★



**[BOOK]**  
**Class: What She Does Next  
Will Astound You**

AUTHOR, JAMES GOSS // PUBLISHER, BBC

The BBC seems determined to secure Class a place in Whovians hearts, with three spin-off novels in the shops before Christmas, just as the TV show is lapping up the last few viewers on BBC iPlayer before being booted off. James Goss knows his stuff, he has written novelisations of Douglas Adams' work in the past, and produced an adaptation of Shada, an unfinished Douglas Adams Doctor Who story, so the story is in good hands. Mocking internet memes, this Class novel gets our vote!

★★★★★

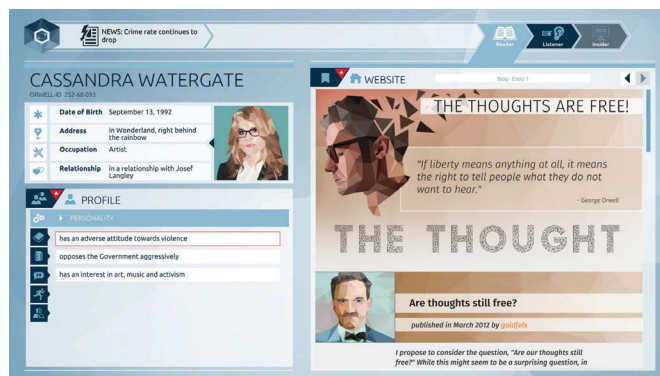
**[GAME]**  
**Orwell**

£7 // PC  
PUBLISHER, SURPRISE ATTACK

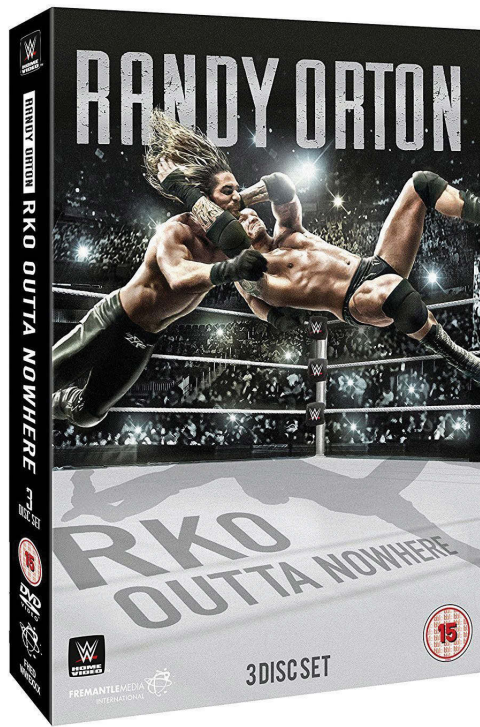
It isn't news to say that our entire lives are being/have been transferred onto the cyber-web-net. This transition, combined with the rampant paranoia of millennials, has bred a generation of cyber-stalkers; burrowing through friends' and crushes' history, social-life, and relationships via social networks. Some have become quite adept at it. Others however have had to quickly explain to certain people how they 'liked' a five year old photo of theirs 'by accident'.

Do not fear – there is a game for you. Osmotic Studios have developed Orwell; a unique game that encourages you to conduct this cyber-sleuthing for the good of a fictional totalitarian government. You're an investigator who gets to trawl through the social networks, e-mails, bank activity, blog posts, and phone calls of dissenters of your 'perfect society'. You must extract data from these wells of information, and resolve the discrepancies and contradictions that may arise. The game therefore is in the same ballpark as 2013's superb Papers, Please. Orwell is surprisingly story-driven too; figuring out timelines and details using the information you've extracted in a way not too dissimilar to 2015's Her Story. Unfortunately, the game doesn't allow you to freely conduct investigations on just any old citizen, but specific ones. Consequently, it occasionally feels like you're on rails. However, this narrative-driven aspect may appeal to some.

★★★★★







[BLU-RAY]

## WWE: Randy Orton – RKO Outta Nowhere

£30 // STARRING, RANDY ORTON  
// STUDIO, FREMANTLE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Randy Orton is an odd subject to get excited about for these sort of blu-ray compilations because, well, it's hard to be excited by Randy Orton. He's the ultimate nearly man of the WWE; a superstar who has done genuinely great things, and often been one of the most solid performers they've had over the past decade and a bit. But he's also fought absolutely everybody countless times, and never quite scaled the heights of popularity that his accolades and tenure would suggest. He's never quite had that extra gear that John Cena has had, and has never quite found that extra dimension to his character to really transcend into a crossover star.

That being said, he's still Randy Orton, and he's still had more than his fair share of excellent matches to look back upon. WWE has had previous releases on the third generation grappler before, which does limit some of the material in an attempt to avoid reusing previously compiled scraps. Fortunately, there's still great stuff here.

It's especially amusing to look back on Orton's rivalry with Cena, from a green as hell encounter that occurred in OVW (developmental), to their TLC 2013 World title unification bout. This was the 'historic' bout that the WWE blew "outta nowhere," and shoved down viewers' throats when they clearly couldn't have cared less. But in the context of this set, it's a compelling story. There are also additional bouts from the OVW period, which are always welcome aspects of this sort of retrospective.

Orton's rivalry with Christian was a tremendous series, and their included Cage match is an excellent, overlooked chapter. Similarly, Orton's Raw tussle from July 2014 with Dean Ambrose probably isn't remembered by most, but it certainly entertains. There are also tussles with Chris Jericho, Edge and Degeneration X. None of these are the finest scraps between those involved, but they're by no means less than

## THERE'S A TON OF GREAT ACTION THAT MAKES THIS COMPILATION WORTHWHILE

enjoyable. Also included, is an absolutely thrilling three-way against Cesaro and Kevin Owens from August 2015, and a terrific clash with Shelton Benjamin.

Better yet, is Orton's gripping battle with Jeff Hardy from the 2008 Royal Rumble, when the latter was red-hot. A Last Man Standing Match with CM Punk is easily the highlight of their 2011 feud, and warrants multiple viewings, as does a fine 2007 title scrap with Shawn Michaels. Orton's mid-card Wrestlemania XXXI tussle with Seth Rollins was the culmination of a seemingly endless rivalry, but the arena setting and stunning finishing sequence make it a treat.

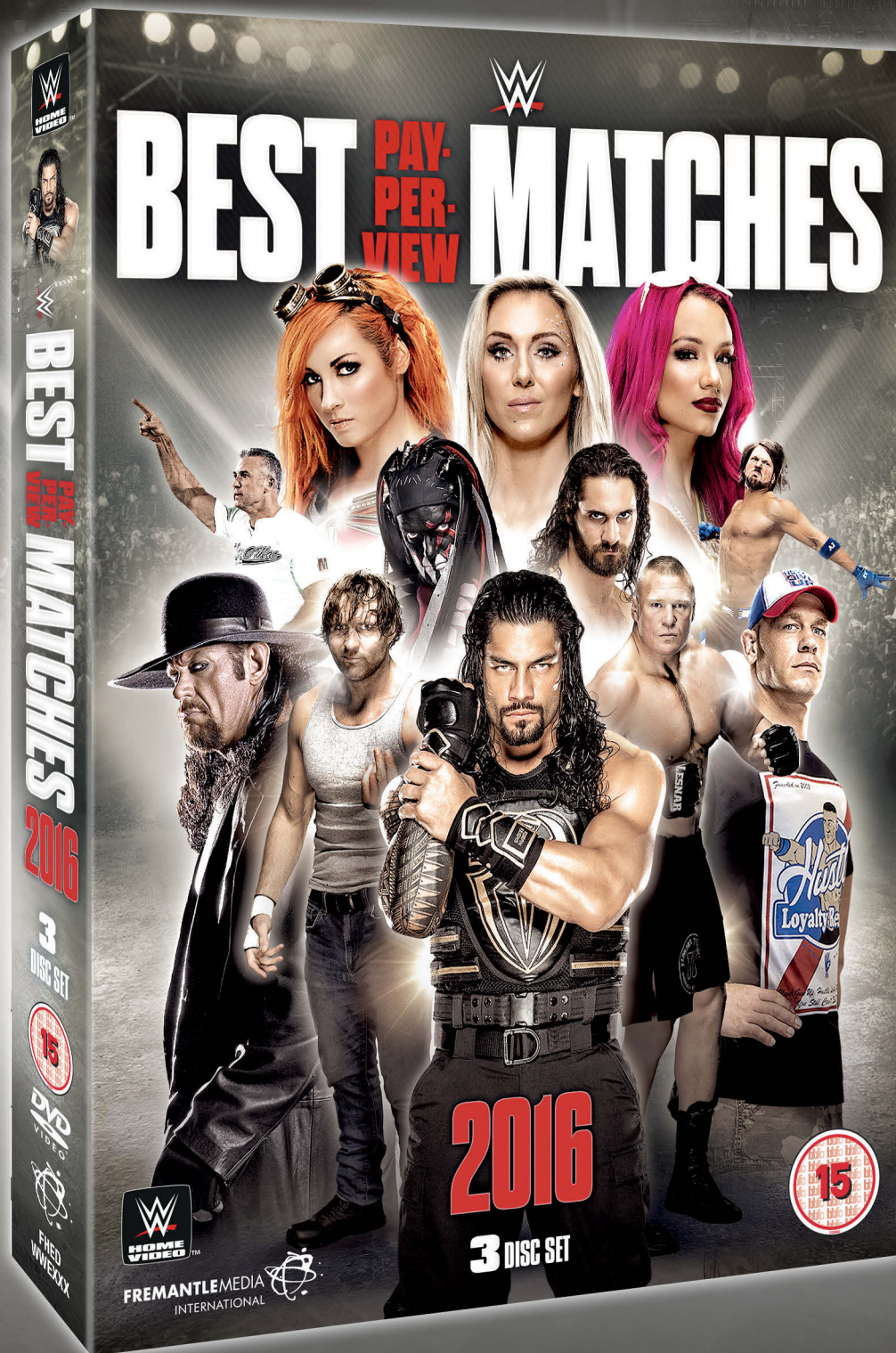
Downsides do surface though. A non-televised dark match with HHH is a fine sleeping aid, while Orton's 2002 tussle with The Undertaker makes for a better anecdote than it does an actual match. A star-studded 2013 Money in the Bank Ladder collision also fails to live up to the names involved. Between the matches, Orton is retrospectively interviewed, and while he covers a wide range of topics, he appears to do so while half asleep. He's so laid-back, he's a chore to listen to. Indeed, it's not helped by his insistence on staying in character for the most part.

Still, despite the lack of engaging commentary, there's a ton of great action that makes this compilation worthwhile. If nothing else, you'll get to see a whole host of novel ways in which Orton nails his RKO finisher. Fans of 'the Viper' will not be disappointed.

☆☆☆☆



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Controlling the campaign with a touch screen takes a bit of getting used to, but it certainly looks mighty impressive.



## Rome: Total War

iOS £7.99 //  
DEVELOPER, THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY

You may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist, but that's just peanuts to the size of the Roman Empire. At its peak it stretched from North Africa and the Middle East, up through Europe and all the way to Hadrian's Wall in the north of England. It was just big, it was verifiably huge and it managed to get that way due to the adoption of almost exactly the same kind combat and management tactics that you can enjoy in this thunderously impressive strategy title, that somehow now fits onto an iPad.

Originating on the PC in 2004 as the second of The Creative Assembly's Total War series, and arguably still the best and certainly the most loved, Rome is essentially a game about conquest and a game about holding on to all has been conquered. It's also a game about developing your society, of researching or adopting the right military and engineering technologies, of engaging in diplomacy and espionage, of maintaining order in your cities and of feeling like you are a driving force of history.

Actually, above all that it's probably best known as being that game that features ma-hoosive battles between hundreds of on-screen units, because it's the images of such spectacles that are undeniably guaranteed to catch the eye and fire the imagination. Indeed, had the developer focused entirely on such real-time engagements we'd still be in the presence of something majestic that's lost little in the translation to touch screen control. Pausing the action and scouring the battlefield is an absolute empowering joy, as is setting your units to adopt different formations for the right situations and follow waypoints that make the greatest tactical use of the terrain.

When you're in the middle of a battle nothing else matters, except maybe another sip of tea. Triumph always

## ONE OF THE IPAD'S GREATEST GAMES AND NOTHING SHORT OF TOTAL WAR

brings with it a pounding sense of glory, failure can leave you depressed for the rest of the day. Especially when entire centuries of your most favourite troops have been lost due to your own foolishness. The battles, then, are brilliant, but without the wider meta strategy game they'd have no real context. Winning for winning's sake is enjoyable sure, and you can fight a number of historical battles separate from the main game. Winning because you really need to take control of a Greek city state so you can send more corn back to your starving capital city and stop it from descending into chaos, however, is absolutely sublime.

Rome: Total War is an almighty package that seamlessly blends the depth of something akin to Sid Meier's Civilization with your favourite battle scenes from whatever historical epic you care to mention. It certainly comes at a prime price, but for the money you get something that you'll be able to dip back into for years that has immense re-playability value and only suffers from one or two minor issues. In its current form it does have the tendency to occasionally crash, so all hail the auto save option – it will be your greatest ally. And your artificially intelligent opponents, while sufficiently skilled on the battlefield, can make massive blunders on the wider tactical map. Don't let such minor issues worry you. This is still one of the iPad's greatest games and nothing short of Total War.

★★★★★



## SteamWorld Heist

iOS £7.99 //  
DEVELOPER, IMAGE & FORM



If your day usually involves having a bullet make half a dozen ricochets before finally blowing the head off a steam-driven robot that's not even standing in the same room as you, then you probably don't need SteamWorld Heist in your

life. As for the rest of us? We do, we really do. Especially those (read: all) of us who adore the likes of XCOM, and really wanted to see such turn-based tactical team combat rendered as a side-on view of a cartoon spaceship full of eccentric humanoid mechanoids.

What we have here is something truly delightful, and something that is as engrossing and enjoyable to play as it is perfectly fair. If you miss a shot, it's because you didn't aim correctly, not because you failed a dice roll. If you get hit, it's because you weren't hiding behind enough cover, not because of some daft percentile protection rule. And if you blast an enemy's hat off, it's because you probably really want his (or her) hat and wish to claim it after the battle. Heist is wonderful, it really is. And it's rich with a host of knobs and switches, dials and springs to play with as you level-up and press ever onward.

★★★★★



## Little Lords of Twilight

iOS FREE // ANDROID FREE  
DEVELOPER, BKOM

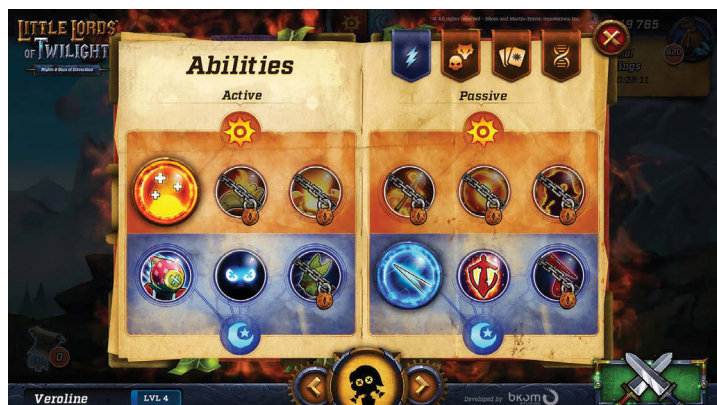


On paper, this one should be just outright awful. It's set in a world that's based on years and years of bedtime stories told between its developer and their kids and, worse than that, it's free-to-play and so obviously a mixture of a sickeningly sweet fantasy and a horrifically

cynical sales model. Well what do you know? In reality it's really rather lovely, has a slightly dark, mischievous edge, and is way smarter and satisfying than it has any reason to be.

Melding multiple mechanics together to offer something fresh as well as endearing, Little Lords of Twilight is a player-verses-player turn-based combat game that just feels like a massive hug. Even when you're losing. Partially based on traditional 'move there, attack that' concepts, it's also a deck-building card game and so as you build your card collection through successful bouts, so your combat options increase. It's got a neat day/night cycle too, and so you have to be ready to deal with the benefits and drawbacks of using different units at different times of day. It also features a gnome who carries bombs about the battlefield in a red wheelbarrow before picking them up, giggling maniacally, and hurling them at haunted rag dolls. Cool.

★★★★★





## Islands: Non Places

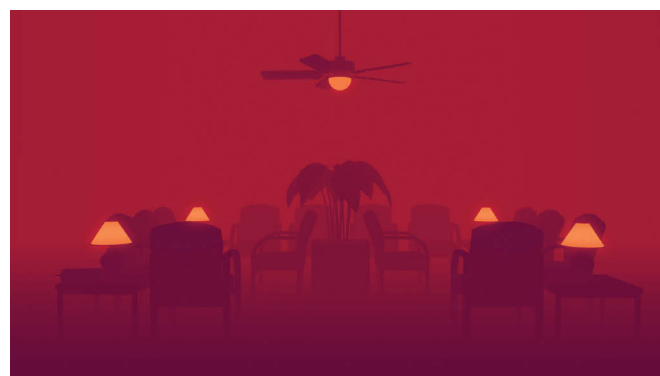
STEAM £3.99 // iOS £2.29  
DEVELOPER, PROSPECT GAMES



Of course games can be considered art, as any games journalist worth their philosophy degree will tell you, but can art ever be considered a game? According to these 3D

installations, no. Islands: Non Places is certainly interactive. You can look around its ten familiar yet alien locations, press stuff, and stuff happens. You might even feel some form of emotional response as what you experience resonates with memories of everyday mundane places. And in that, it's worthwhile and a little bit great. As a game, it's really not. Pretentious? Possibly.

☆☆☆☆



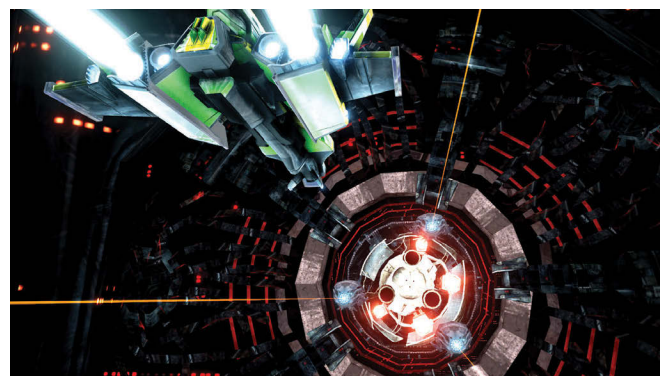
## The Collider 2

iOS £1.49 //  
DEVELOPER, SHORBREAK STUDIOS



If you feel the need, the need for speed, and are also quite tempted by the hectically exciting concept of flying a small spaceship as it goes zooming through the insides of a much, much larger craft, while dodging crossbeams, pipes, walkways, laser traps and a whole host of assorted mechanical entrails, then Collider 2 is most certainly for you. It's pretty much that bit in Return of the Jedi in which Richard Bonehill and Billy Dee Williams weave the Millennium Falcon up the alimentary canal of the Death Star, and you get to forget about the Ewoks, but on fast-forward and with much better special effects. And it detests players who like to blink.

☆☆☆☆



## Don't Grind

iOS FREE // ANDROID FREE  
DEVELOPER, LASER DOG



It'll help you massively if you simply think of Don't Grind as a game of 'keepie uppie', but instead of a football or hacky sack you use a doughnut, or a banana, or some other everyday foodstuff.

Oh, and instead of an everyday foodstuff what you're actually trying to keep in the air via taps and swipes is something edible that's also alive, most probably has feelings, hopes, dreams and ambitions, and really doesn't want to fall into those spinning buzzsaws at the bottom of the screen to be shredded to pieces. Far more skilful (and brutal) than it might sound, it's a game that you'll master when you enter a state of Zen and become one with its flow.

☆☆☆☆





# DRONE

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# TECH KNOW

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## Time to Switch?

No longer called the NX, please welcome the Switch, Nintendo's latest console.



Despite the lukewarm reception for the WiiU, Nintendo aren't planning to get out of the hardware market just yet. In fact, they recently announced a new console, the Nintendo Switch, that the company will be releasing in March.

Typically for Nintendo though, rather than release a machine with cutting-edge technology to blow Sony and Microsoft away, they've gone for something cheaper and utterly unique. The hook with Nintendo's Switch is that while you can connect up the console to the TV as per normal, you can also use a portable screen to continue your gaming on the go.

The main unit of the Switch has a screen built in, and is housed in a dock when you're playing it on the TV. The controller, which is made up of three sections, can be separated and then, when you attach the two ends of the controller to the main unit, you can remove the screen and the game instantly flips to the handheld device for gaming on the go.

Nintendo hasn't released any technical specifications yet, but we've been reliably informed that the Switch comes with a 6.2-inch screen running at 720p resolution. It also has multitouch detection too, so you'll be able to run a number of apps on it. The announcement video released online does show the console running the remastered version of Skyrim too, so hopes are high that the graphical capabilities of the Switch are comparable (if

not quite as good as) the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One. All this portability does mean that the games will be coming on a memory card format though (oh, Nintendo – Ed), but considering the advancement in memory and storage compression, you shouldn't lose any quality over disc-based versions. The important thing though is the games that will be released for it. As Nintendo is one of the strongest first-party developers in the world, you can expect Mario, Mario Kart and Zelda as standard, but a number of third-party developers are already onboard too including EA, Bethesda, SEGA, Activision, Square Enix, Capcom and Ubisoft. We've scouted around the web and compiled a list of some of the titles we're most excited about playing on Switch.

Price is always another important factor when it comes to buying a new console and, as you'd imagine, Nintendo isn't revealing much on that front either. However the retailer GAME let it slip that they would be stocking the console for the price of £199.99 – with another model retailing at £249.99 that will feature larger internal storage. Whoops!

We love Nintendo for many things (the Game Boy, pretty much any Mario game, people dressed in Link cosplay) and it's hard not to admire a company that is constantly trying new things and breaking down the traditional barriers in videogaming. The company is holding a Switch Hands-On event on 12 January, where more details about the console and its forthcoming titles will be revealed, so we will bring you a further report on what we think of Nintendo's newest console then. **GM**



## THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Nintendo will be looking to get off to a flying start with Switch, and so we're expecting the launch titles for the console to be impressive. Here's a few to whet your appetite, based on what we know and what we saw in the teaser trailer...

### The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild

// NINTENDO EPD

Nintendo's hugely anticipated next chapter in the Zelda story has been delayed on WiiU until March to allow a simultaneous release with the Switch.

### Splatoon Switch

// NINTENDO

Considering the success of the team-based ink shoot-'em-up on WiiU, it's no surprise to see it jumping over to Switch, too. How the gameplay will be updated remains to be seen, but expect to see some improvements in the graphical department.

### Mario Kart Switch

// NINTENDO

Well, it wouldn't be a Nintendo console without a Mario Kart game now, would it? We've only had a small glimpse of the game in action, but it appears to be very similar in look and feel to Mario Kart 8 – that'll do pig, that'll do.

### Project Sonic 2017

// SEGA

If you're a fan of the Sonic series (and a number of people seem to be for some unexplainable reason) then you'll probably be delighted to hear that the development team behind Sonic Colors and Sonic Generations has a new title on the boil.

### The Elder Scrolls 5: Skyrim

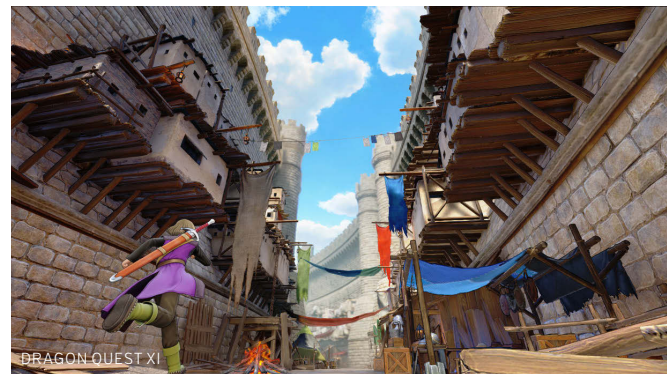
// BETHESDA

Despite the fact that the game appeared in the trailer, Bethesda is still remaining tightlipped about a Switch version. The wise money is on them bringing the title to Switch on its release.

### Dragon Quest X and XI

// SQUARE ENIX

Although the Dragon Quest series has a fairly limited popularity in the UK, it's still enormous in Japan, so launching the latest version on Switch, as well as a conversion of X, will be a major plus for Nintendo's new hardware.





# Microsoft Surface Studio

All things bright and beautiful...



After impressing the world with its Surface tablets and hybrids, Microsoft now feel the time is right to release this, their first-ever desktop computer. And, as you'd expect from Microsoft, it's hugely impressive in many ways, but slightly lacking in others.

The Surface Studio might initially look like an Apple iMac, and we're sure that is deliberate, but what you're actually getting here is a massive tablet with a computer bolted on. The screen of the Studio is a whopping 28 inches, and its PixelSense display means that everything looks bright and beautiful from whatever angle you're viewing it.

One of the standout original features for the Studio is that the screen is hinged. The default position is obviously vertical, but it can be moved down to an angle of just 20 degrees if you want to draw straight onto it with the supplied stylus.

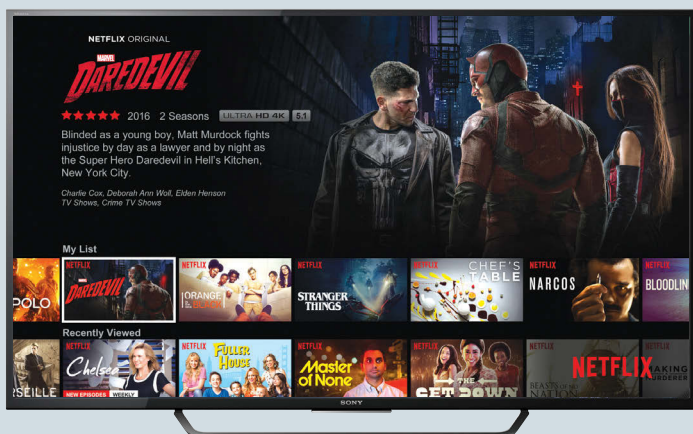
Before we shock you with the price, we thought we'd take a closer look at some of the chips powering this beast. You get a quad-core i7 processor knocking out 2.7GHz, an Nvidia 980M GPU, up to 32GB of RAM and a maximum hard drive of 2TB (with 128GB of that being SSD). That's certainly enough to keep everything running smoothly, but it's worth pointing out that the Studio isn't a dedicated games machine, so some newer titles may perform better on dedicated gaming rigs.

So how much does all this cost? Well, you're looking at around \$3,000 (£2,379) for the 'basic' model, which goes up to over \$4,200 (£3,331) for the top of the range one. So this isn't a computer that you're going to just get to do the odd bit of eBay buying and checking out Facebook on, but despite the high price point, Microsoft claim that their initial batch of Studios have all been snapped up and there's a waiting list until well into 2017.

Touchscreen comes as standard obviously, but you're also able to buy an optional Surface Dial accessory that connects to the Studio via Bluetooth and is, essentially, a dial that you can drop anywhere on the screen and rotate to skip through menus, colours, brushes – you name it. It's a beautiful thing to see in motion, but only really useful for artists or designers.

And that, in essence, is why the Studio isn't for everyone. Microsoft is clearly targeting the creative industries that currently use iMacs as standard, but the price point may be enough to put a lot of people off. Sure, there's a fair amount of power under the Studio's hood, but at that price we have to say that we expected more. And the fact that pretty much everything internally is soldered in, and therefore not able to be upgraded, means that in a couple of years you may end up with a very beautiful, but very expensive computer that will already need changing. **GM**





## Netflix Warms to Downloads

PRICE, £5.99-£8.99 PM // NETFLIX.COM

There's some good news for users of the Netflix service, as the streaming giant has recently announced that viewers can now download and keep selected shows for offline viewing on any of their linked devices. Finding out if a video you would like to keep is available for downloading is simple. Just go through to the page for that show and then next to each episode is a download icon. In a statement, Netflix said, "While many members enjoy watching Netflix at home, we've often heard they also want to continue their Stranger Things binge while on airplanes and other places where the Internet is expensive or limited." Right now the service is limited to Netflix created shows, but that means we can take Black Mirror wherever we go.

## Wireless Control for NES

PRICE, \$40 (£32) // 8BITDO.COM

Incredibly, the must-have gaming gadget right now isn't an Xbox One or a PlayStationVR headset, but the relaunch of a console system released 33 years ago by the granddaddy of videogames – Nintendo. The NES Classic is impossible to find anywhere, as the £50 retro console that comes packed with 30 classic Nintendo Entertainment System games appears to have completely sold out. One downside to the machine is that it still uses wired controllers, and the cable that comes with it is ludicrously short. Luckily, an enterprising company called 8Bitdo has already created an adaptor that plugs straight into the NES Classic. It's not cheap at £32, but if you're determined to play your NES games wirelessly, then this is the way to go.



## Full Stream Ahead for Virgin

PRICE, £299 (TELLY TABLET), £100 (V6) // VIRGINMEDIA.COM

Virgin Media hosted an event at the end of November to unleash its latest weapons in the war for TV domination. As more and more people are flocking towards subscription services like Netflix and Amazon Prime, companies like Virgin and Sky are seeing their numbers drop. In a bid to redress the balance, Virgin Media has released a brand-new 4K set-top box, and even their own tablet that they're calling the Telly Tablet. It has a 14 inch fully HD screen with 32GB of storage and a kickstand built in. It's clearly designed to be a portable viewing device for binge-watching TV shows, but as it runs a customised version of Android Marshmallow it can be used as a standard tablet computer too. It costs £299 if you want to buy it upfront, or if you're a Virgin customer then you can have it included in your package for a small additional monthly fee. Additionally, Virgin's V6 set-top box is a much beefier bit of kit than their previous ones. They claim it's ten times faster than the last black box they put into viewers' living rooms, comes with its own version of the BBC's iPlayer app, and can play shows and films in Ultra HD. It's powerful enough to record six shows simultaneously, and comes with a 1TB hard drive.





# TOP GEAR

TAKE A LOOK AT THE HOTTEST TECH INNOVATIONS THAT  
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## Zinc Smart A Power Board

£399 // ZINCSPORTS.COM // AVAILABLE, FROM ARGOS NOW

Every year we get a little bit closer to living in the 2015 vision of the future shown to us in Back to the Future II, thanks to the innovation of companies like Zinc. Once you have mastered your balance, the Zinc Smart A Power Board can reach speeds of up to 7.5mph, will take you up inclines of up to 25 degrees and will last for 20km between charges. It's a surprisingly smooth ride, and perfect to make your daily commute that bit more futuristic. Safety was an issue in the early days of Power Boards, but tech companies have worked hard to bring the device up to scratch. Find out more on the Zinc website at [zincsports.com](http://zincsports.com).



## Nu-Gen Gaming Arcade

FROM £3795 // BESPOKE-ARCADES.CO.UK // AVAILABLE, NOW

It's the ultimate toy for the ultimate gamer's den – a bespoke Nu-Gen arcade cabinet from world leaders in hand-crafted coin-ops, Bespoke Arcades. Based on the Japanese-style sit down arcade machines, the Nu-Gen boasts a 32 inch HD display and quality two player arcade joystick and button controls, perfect for bouts of beat-'em-up action side-by-side. The price tag is high, starting from £3795, but these are hand built to order, with decals to suit your taste, and the tech innards allow you to access 800+ arcade games through emulation, with over 15 emulators included in the cabinet. Back to the 80s for us!



## Zoopa Q165 Racing Drone

£33 // AMAZON // AVAILABLE, NOW

If you've dabbled with mini drones you will know that the biggest fault is rotor blades that go ping-pong-ing off in all directions when you inevitably smash it into a wall, or the dog. Well the Zoopa Q165 has solved that by building protection into the chassis. It's a quadcopter design with four powerful blades, lightweight and agile with front and rear lights so you can work out which way around it is when performing stunts and 360° loop-the-loops. If your flying skills are lacking then the Q165's six-axis gyro 2.0 tech will compensate for your cack-handed controls, so you can look like the master drone pilot you know you could be.



## RED-i Camera

£19.99 // ZINCSPORTS.COM // AVAILABLE, FROM ARGOS NOW

Last issue we brought you the Volt 80+ scooter that's available now from Argos, and above we have the Smart A Power Board, well if you're going to become the next YouTube stunt sensation you will need one of these RED-i Camera kits too. Zinc has created a handy 720 x 480 resolution camera that has silicone arms to allow you to attach it easily to the helmet of your choice. With one touch recording and a built in microphone it will capture your most bodacious stunts, then you can easily download the video through a USB link and upload your adventures to the internet for public ridicule.





# WIN! STAR WARS™ MODEL KITS FROM REVELL\* COMPETITION TIME!



The Revell Build & Play and Easykits may be suitable for younger geeks, but you just know that any Star Wars fan will get a blast out of building their own model kits.



You get two model kits in the Jakku Combat Set – the iconic Millennium Falcon™ and a TIE Fighter™, both battle damaged but still looking mighty fine.

WITH ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS™ STORY DOING GREAT BOX OFFICE NUMBERS, MODEL KIT MAKERS REVELL HAVE A NEW RANGE OF KITS FEATURING ICONIC STAR WARS™ VEHICLES.

We've been lucky enough to be given three model kits from their new range to give away to Geeky Monkey readers. We have a Build & Play Jakku Combat Set with battle damaged Millennium Falcon™ and TIE Fighter™, an AT-AT™ Easykit and Obi Wan's Jedi Starfighter™ model kit.

All you've got to do to win a Star Wars model kit is visit Geeky Monkey on Facebook or Twitter and answer the question you will find there...

**A. Facebook:** Visit our Facebook page at [facebook.com/geekymonkeymag](https://www.facebook.com/geekymonkeymag) then Like, Share and Comment on the competition post before emailing us the answer.

OR

**B. Twitter:** Go to [twitter.com/thegeekymonkey](https://twitter.com/thegeekymonkey), Like and Retweet the competition Tweet then answer the question.

We'll select the winners at random on 28 January.

Revell Star Wars™ model kits are available from Amazon and all good toy and model stores.

For details visit [www.revell.de/en](http://www.revell.de/en)



**TERMS & CONDITIONS:** \*Prizes subject to availability. Competition open to mainland UK and Northern Ireland residents only. Employees of Uncooked Media Ltd and their families are not eligible to enter. The competition closes at 23:59 on 27 January, entries received after that time will not be counted. Winners will be selected at random on 28 January and contacted via email. Prizes will be delivered to mainland UK and Ireland addresses only, we do not post prizes to Eire. Uncooked Media Ltd reserves the right to withdraw one or all prizes without notification. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



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## THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE

// 1959

*directed by*

ROY DEL RUTH

*featuring*

BEVERLY GARLAND // **JOYCE WEBSTER**

BRUCE BENNETT // **DR. ERIC LORIMER**

RICHARD CRANE // **PAUL WEBSTER**

Late Fifties Hollywood was a very different place to today. The film companies had hundreds of slots to fill and produced low budget horror and science fiction B movies in a fortnight. Of course there was a lot of tosh put out, but occasionally something fantastic emerged.

Promising 'nerve shattering terror', 20th Century Fox's *The Alligator People* was one such CinemaScope marvel. It was directed by one of the early pioneers of movie making, Roy Del Ruth. Ruth had directed the first ever colour movie for Warner Bros, 1929's *The Desert Song*, and dabbled in early 3D with 1954's *Phantom of the Rue Morgue* before bringing *The Alligator People* to the screen. His groundbreaking work in the movies earned him a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

A ridiculous story by modern standards, at the time *The Alligator People* was popcorn horror at its best. Set in the Deep South of America, a Doctor experiments with reptilian hormones in an attempt to regenerate limbs in amputees, only it goes wrong turning a patient into a half-man, half-alligator creature. A bit scaly, the man is still loved by his mother and wife, but on seeing his own reflection he decides that disappearing into the swamp is probably the best for everyone. Alligator head and high-waisted trousers was a look he was never going to pull off.

---

"I'LL KILL YOU  
ALLIGATOR MAN! JUST  
LIKE I'D KILL ANY FOUR-  
LEGGED GATOR!"

---









IF YOU WANT A MODEL OF BACK TO THE FUTURE'S DELOREAN THEN YOU HAVE THREE BITES OF THE CHERRY – ORIGINAL, PART II OR PART III CARS. WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE RAILROAD CONVERSION OF DOC BROWN'S TIME MACHINE...

# BACK TO THE FUTURE III

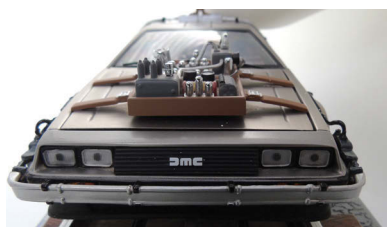


**GEEKY MONKEY**

KEEP UP WITH THE  
LATEST GEEK TOY NEWS  
– RETRO AND MODERN

## REMEMBERING...

# BACK TO THE FUTURE III DELOREAN SUNSTAR RAILROAD EDITION



### WHAT THE HELL IS A SUNSTAR DELOREAN?

Back in the early 1990s, Sun Star, and a few other Chinese companies, popularised the 1:18 scale diecast model car, creating a new standard for collectable models. There had been cars to this scale before, but more by chance than design, early plastic models in the USA had a standard of 1:25. What Sun Star did so well was the attention to detail they put into their models, and the three versions they created of the Back to the Future DeLorean time machine are a perfect example. Come on, who hasn't dreamt of owning their own DeLorean? You can still pick up early 80s cars for around £25,000, but for most a diecast model is more in their price range.

### WHY DID YOU WANT IT?

Coming in a presentation box that includes scenery from the third movie, and mounted to a piece of train track, the Railroad Edition DeLorean is the one that Doc Brown had to customise in his blacksmith's workshop back in 1885. The tyres have been removed from the wheels, allowing it to roll along the tracks, and the bonnet has a wooden tray added with some primitive valves and fuses housed inside. Of course, this version of the DeLorean has already been into the future, so the back of the car also has a Mr Fusion Home Energy Reactor mounted between the exhausts to power the flux capacitor. This model really looks the business, and any fan of the greatest time travel movie trilogy ever made would want it.

### IS IT AS AWESOME AS YOU REMEMBER?

Yell yeah! It doesn't do much. Well the wheels spin and you can open the iconic gullwing doors to take a look inside. You can get even more detailed models than this with turning wheels connected to the steering wheel and working lights, but the Sun Star models were made to have mass market appeal. Originally selling for around £60, they were within the realm of an expensive Christmas present. This DeLorean will take pride of place on any geek's shelf, it's great to be able to peek inside and check out the flux capacitor and tiny time circuits.

### CAN I GET ONE?

Second hand models do come up on auction sites from time to time, but a word of warning. There are lots of very delicate pieces to these Sun Star models, and if not handled carefully bits can easily break off. We bought our model for £21, sold as in mint condition, but on receiving it found that one of the black exhausts either side of the Mr Fusion was missing. The car does look good though.



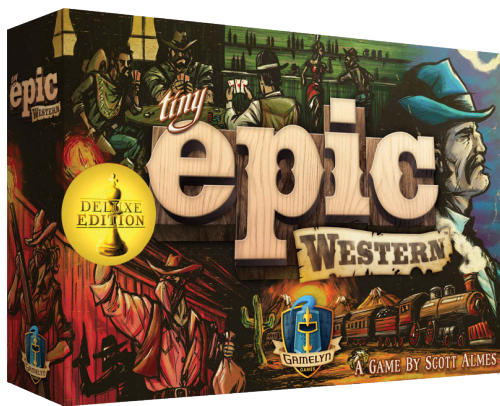


**THE RAILROAD  
EDITION  
DELOREAN IS THE  
ONE THAT DOC  
BROWN HAD TO  
CUSTOMISE IN HIS  
BLACKSMITH'S  
WORKSHOP BACK  
IN 1885**



The level of detail in the custom kit added to this DeLorean is incredible.





## TABLETOP

Words: **ROB BURMAN**

Rob was the editor of Tabletop Gaming magazine



BY CROM! THE CONAN GAME IS FINALLY HERE! PLAY AWAY...

After successfully raising \$3 million on Kickstarter in early 2015, the road to release for Monolith's Conan game has been more troubled than Darth Vader's teenage years. Originally due for release last October, the game has now finally hit shelves and the question, of course, on everyone's lips is... has the wait been worth it?

Inspired by Robert E. Howard's loin cloth-sporting barbarian, Conan Board Game (£92.99, Monolith) puts up to four players in charge of Conan and his pals, while another player is the evil 'overlord' who must stop the heroes at all costs... so choose one of your friends who has a nasty streak to fulfil that role. Once you've decided that, it's time to play through one of the eight scenarios included in the game and they're all suitably varied, so one minute you'll be leaping between pirate ships and the next you're raiding a village. Fans of Conan – books, comics or Arnie films – will definitely feel at home here.

One of the most striking elements of Conan – from a board game design point of view – is the way characters are activated during the heroes' turns. Each hero is attributed a certain amount of gems, which can then be spent in any order. So, instead of each character being forced to perform all their actions at once, you can mix up the order to hopefully vex the evil overlord. However, there's a similar mechanic for the overlord, that sees them able to spend gems to bring minions into play.

Admittedly, although there are four heroes in play during a game, Conan steals the show while the rest feel like supporting characters, but that's kind of what you expect. Still, the action comes fast and furious... perhaps a little too fast because there are only eight scenarios that you'll blast through pretty quickly. Here's hoping the community starts creating their own adventures!

Continuing the hard fantasy theme, we've got A Game of Thrones: Hand of the King (£11.99, Fantasy Flight Games),





**THE CITY ITSELF IS REPRESENTED BY A SIX-BY-SIX GRID OF WELL-KNOWN CHARACTERS FROM THE BOOKS AND BLOCKBUSTER TV SHOW**

## THE ROAD TO RELEASE FOR MONOLITH'S CONAN GAME HAS BEEN MORE TROUBLED THAN DARTH VADER'S TEENAGE YEARS

although rather than going for Game of Thrones' more serious style, this is a 'whimsical' card game. That's right, it's a 'whimsical game of wits' according to the publisher... not a term we would normally associate with Game of Thrones. Anyway, unlike some of the other Game of Thrones tabletop experiences, Hand of the King doesn't require an entire afternoon to play and you don't need a Masters in strategic choices to grasp the rules.

The idea is you're attempting to gain the favour of the different Houses (Lannister, Tyrell, et al.) in order to take control of King's Landing. The city itself is represented by a six-by-six grid of well-known characters from the books and blockbuster TV show, and each turn you send Varys out to 'recruit' the card you want. When you've collected the last card from a particular House, you can then choose a companion card (Hodor, Jon Snow, and many more) and use their special ability to swing the game in your favour. It's a surprisingly tactical but quick little card game that is sure to go down well with Thronites.

Talking of small, our final highlight this issue of Geeky Monkey is Tiny Epic Western (£25.99, Gamelyn Games), a game that may come in a diddy little box but doesn't scrimp on the action. Players try to claim different locations in a classic Wild West town by placing their tokens on the board, but you can challenge people to a dice duel to steal locations. There's a nice poker element to proceedings too, as you attempt to claim extra victory points by playing hands of cards, ensuring the whole package oozes with classic Wild West charm. So many great board games to choose from, and lots of people around over the holidays eager to play – bliss. **GM**

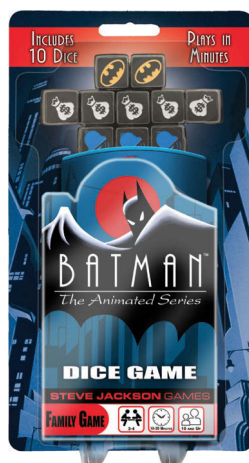


## WHO ARE YOU? I'M THE NEW BATMAN DICE GAME!

A game on the horizon to watch out for is Batman: The Animated Series Dice Game by Steve Jackson Games. If you're familiar with the classic Zombie Dice, then you'll immediately be at home with this, as it's basically the same game but with a Bat makeover. The twist here is that you're actually playing the bad guys (Joker, Catwoman, The Riddler and Poison Ivy) as you try to pull off the most daring bank job possible.

The game comes with ten dice, each with different symbols on: loot, Batman and alarm icons. On your turn you need to collect as many loot icons as possible without rolling too many Batman or alarm symbols. You score one point for each loot icon, so it's a case of pressing your luck until you chicken out or roll three Batman icons, in which case it's game over.

A nice touch is that the four super villains all have different abilities, so Poison Ivy can ignore one Batman symbol, Catwoman doubles loot. If you want a quick filler game full of Bat-action, this is one to keep an eye on.





# GEEK CHIC

IT'S WHAT ALL THE GEEKY MONKEYS ARE WEARING...



## HOODIES

### Smooth Imperial

What more could you want from a mash-up? Michael Jackson meets a Star Wars Stormtrooper. The ultimate hoodie?

£30 // SOMETHINGGEEKY.COM

### Tekken 6

An official Bandai Namco product, wear the Tekken logo with pride.

£33 // SPREADSHIRT.CO.UK

### Street Fighter Chun-Li

Officially licensed by Capcom, all lady geeks will feel kick-ass in this.

\$50 (£39) // THINKGEEK.COM

### Poki-Go

Slightly reword the name and hey-presto! A Pokémon-e-like hoodie that shows your love of AR gaming!

£32 // GEEKHOODIES.COM



## T-SHIRTS

### Sodium Batman

He may love the suit, but underneath it all Batman loves his science. That's why this T-shirt has sodium symbols.

\$20 (£16) // THINKGEEK.COM

### 1st Doctor M.O.E.

Dark Bunny is having a sale of its Doctor Who T-shirts, like this one inspired by The Dalek Invasion of Earth for only a fiver!

£5 // DARKBUNNYTEES.COM

### Evil Ewok

You know they're not cute teddy bears, right? They have a vicious streak.

£13 // SOMETHINGGEEKY.COM

### Family Guy Big is Bluetiful

The No.1 adult cartoon show, as voted by you on Twitter, and a knockout tee.

£14 // SPREADSHIRT.CO.UK



## BAGS

### Captain America Distressed Shield

Wow, no one is going to mess with you when your backpack is the Cap's shield.

\$65 (£51) // THINKGEEK.COM

### Rogue One Rebel Dopp Kit

The Rogue One merch is coming thick and fast, and great quality too!

\$35 (£28) // THEMOTIEANDTVSTORE.COM

### Back to the Future Tin Tote

Woah! Want one now. BTTF is in the Geeky Monkey top three movies of all time, we want our lunch from this tin.

£20 // RETRORULES.CO.UK

### Millennium Falcon Coin Bag

In metallic-style faux leather (classy), this official wallet will keep your loose change safe from the Empire.

\$20 (£16) // THEMOTIEANDTVSTORE.COM



## ACCESSORIES

### Star Trek Boxer Shorts

Pay tribute to Kirk, Scotty and Spock from Star Trek by wearing these boxers.

\$30 (£24) // THEMOTIEANDTVSTORE.COM

### The Walking Dead Lucille Lamp

Just what you need by your bedside, the final thing you see before you go to sleep – the bat that killed Glenn and Abraham!

\$80 (£63) // THEMOTIEANDTVSTORE.COM

### Pokéball His and Hers

A necklace for her, keychain for him. The ultimate Poké love symbols for on the GO!

£9 // ETSY.COM

### Rogue One: K-2SO Pendant

You won't find K-2SO moaning like C-3PO, this is one robot who knows his mind, and his mind loves this gunmetal pendant.

\$25 (£17) // THINKGEEK.COM



THE BRAND NEW GAME BASED ON THE UNRELENTING DARK FANTASY EPIC



Pre-order now at

GAME ShopTo amazon.co.uk



PS4

PSVITA



STEAM



Produced by  
Omega Force

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## STAR TREK: THE ANIMATED SERIES

BROADCAST, 1973-1974 // NETWORK, NBC

// SEASONS, 2 // EPISODES, 22

# BOLDLY GOING 2D...

**Words: MARK NEWBOLD**

Has boldly gone where no man has gone before

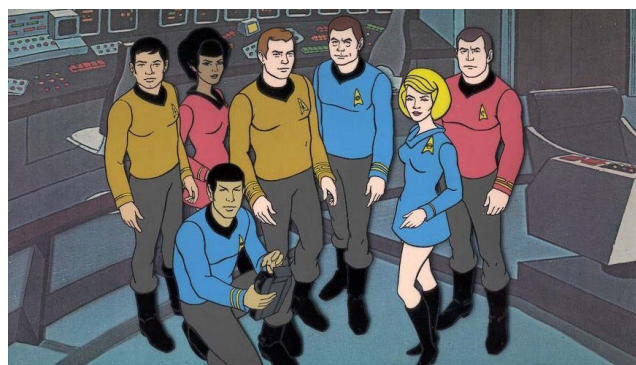
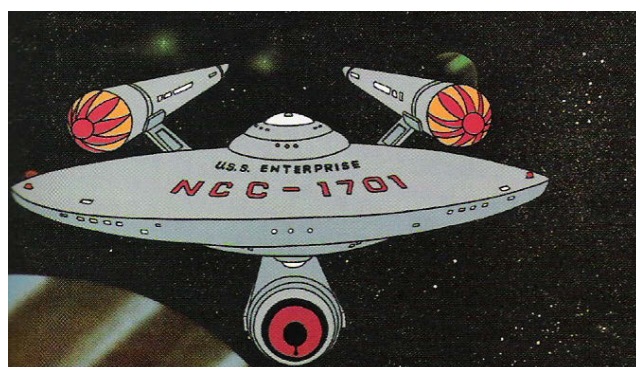
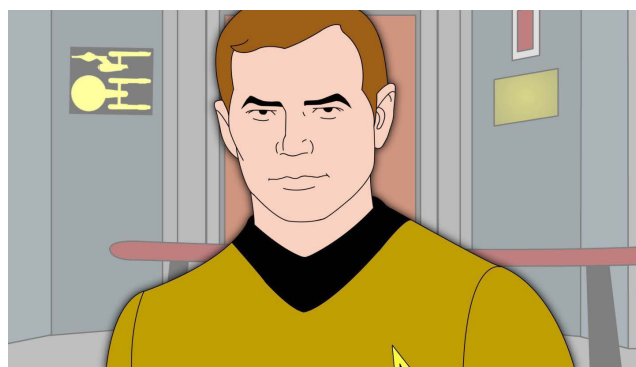
The fifty year journey of the original Star Trek crew has taken many twists and turns. From the live action original series of '66 to '69, through the aborted Phase 2 and the arrival of the big screen adventures, up to and including the 2009 'reboot' of the 11th movie: Kirk, Spock, McCoy and crew have seen it all. Those post-five year mission adventures also include Filmation's '73 to '74 animated series. With a vastly swelling fandom clamouring for more Star Trek and Paramount unwilling to proceed with a costly live action return, an animated series was a cheap and logical option to satiate the fan base and not break the bank. Filmation initially planned to use the voices of William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan and Majel Barrett, with Doohan and Barrett providing the voices of Sulu and Uhura. That didn't sit well with Nimoy, who backed away from the series until Nichelle Nichols and George Takei – the cast members who most visibly signified the message of diversity – were brought in.

Unrestricted by the constraints of 70's special effects budgets, the 22 episodes of the animated series made the most of the opportunities laid before it. It's admittedly limited animation still allowed for characters such as the three-armed Edosian Lieutenant Arex and Lt. M'Ress, a female Caitian. Walter Koenig may not have portrayed Chekov but joined the series as a writer. Koenig wrote the seventh episode of the first season The Infinite Vulcan and became the first Trek actor to write an episode of the show. Other notable writers included Samuel Peeples, who wrote the second pilot of the original series Where No Man Has Gone Before, original series writer D.C. Fontana, David Gerrold of The Trouble With Tribbles fame and Ringworld author Larry Niven. With these star names involved, and despite being shown on Saturday mornings, the series certainly didn't lack star power. Season two episode How Sharper Than A Serpents Tooth won the franchise's first Emmy, the Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Children's Series and helped to cement Star Trek in the minds of not only the fans who missed it so much but a younger generation, some of whom were being introduced to Trek for the first time on a Saturday morning.

Despite its relegation in the late 80s from any kind of canon into a cul-de-sac of apocryphal stories, it still managed to notch up numerous mentions in later Trek tales. As the ever-increasing release schedules of the novels increased, these animated stories were written up by none other than Alan Dean Foster as the 10 Mission Logs novels. Foster would be involved in the development of the first motion picture, writing its novelisation and contributing other novels to the Trek story over the decades. It brought back familiar Trek locations and characters – the Guardian of Forever in Yesteryear and Cyrano Jones in David Gerrold's follow up to his classic Original Series episode Trouble With Tribbles, More Tribbles, More Troubles. Indeed, the series allowed Gerrold to bestow upon Kirk the middle name of Tiberius, informed the Next Generation episode Unification with elements of Spock's childhood and showed Trek's first holodeck (known then as the rec room). Despite being non-canon its reach has woven into the fabric of the wider Trek story. Not a bad legacy for a 40+ year old Saturday morning cartoon. **GM**

Paramount Home Entertainment released a blu-ray box set of **Star Trek: The Animated Series** on 28 November.

## DESPITE BEING NON-CANON ITS REACH HAS WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF THE WIDER TREK STORY





# STAR TREK

## THE ANIMATED SERIES





**MARVEL**

AARON  
CASSADAY  
MARTIN

001

# STAR WARS





# A LONG TIME AGO IN A GALAXY IN FOUR COLOURS

IN HIS FORMATIVE YEARS GEORGE LUCAS WAS A BIG COMIC BOOK FAN. HIS PASSION FOR CHARACTER, STORY AND ACTION UNDENIABLY INFLUENCED HIS CREATION OF THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE IN FILM. THE SUCCESS OF THE MOVIES SOON BROUGHT INTEREST FROM COMIC BOOK PUBLISHERS. GEEKY MONKEY TAKES A LOOK AT THE STORIED HISTORY OF STAR WARS COMICS...

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**Words: WILL COOLING**

One day his comic collection will break through the attic floor.

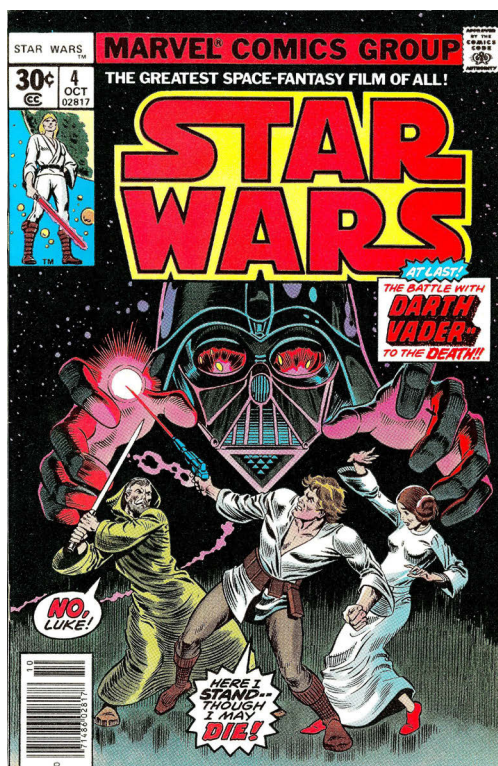
Star Wars fans enjoying all the hype around *Rogue One* may have missed one of the biggest events in the saga's history. Last October saw the conclusion of *Darth Vader*, Kieron Gillen and Salvador Larroca's thrilling exploration as to how The Dark Lord of the Sith rose from being the disgraced henchman of the late Grand Moff Tarkin to being The Emperor's second-in-command. They managed to blend political intrigue, dynamic action and dark comedy into a coherent narrative that deepened our understanding of Darth Vader's place in the Star Wars universe.

Collected across five issues, *Darth Vader* is the critical darling of one Marvel Comics' biggest success stories of recent years. Ever since Marvel resumed publishing Star Wars comics in 2015, the line has proven to be one of its most consistent sellers, with only *Amazing Spider-Man* consistently outperforming the eponymous lead title. A key part of this success has been Marvel recruiting the

best writers and artists to bring the world of Star Wars to life on its pages. While Gillen and Larroca were vividly reimagining Darth Vader, the highly talented Jason Aaron and John Cassaday were using *Star Wars* to show how Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia and Han Solo fought to build on The Rebel Alliance's momentum following The Battle of Yavin.

The shared focus on the time between *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back* is no accident, as explained by the group's editor, Jordan White. "[People complain that] 'You could do all these different books in different times, and you could expand the universe for hundreds of years in either direction' And yet we were there starting in one time period, with all of our books, and we said, 'Well, yes, but our reasoning there is we wanted to make it like the comic book universe'". The shared time-period has allowed the comics to crossover both implicitly by shared moments being shown from different perspectives in different titles, and more explicitly in ►





the excellent Vader Down crossover. It would be fair to say the level of investment and attention to detail is a world away from the last time Marvel published Star Wars.

## PRESENT AT THE CREATION

The marriage between Star Wars and comics goes back to the very beginning of the saga. George Lucas was not only a rabid comics fan from childhood, but had radical ideas about the possibilities for merchandising the characters introduced in his film. Both the fanboy and businessman sides of Lucas' personality led him to aggressively pitch Star Wars to comics publishers. Alas for Lucas, he met with significant resistance, with Stan Lee himself turning down the opportunity. Luckily he had another contact within Marvel – Lee's right-hand man, Roy Thomas. They had met previously when the film was in production, forging a connection that got Lucas' lead publicist, Charles Lippincott, one last chance to pitch Star Wars to Marvel. Thomas would recount how he was persuaded that this was no ordinary sci-fi film:

"Charlie flipped over the next production sketch. 'This,' he said as he did so, 'is what we call the cantina sequence'.

It was a scene of two guys with rayguns – one an Earthman type, one a pointy-eared alien with a tail – about to 'slap leather' in what looked like a saloon, but amid a cast of otherworldly aliens and armoured soldiers Charlie had called Stormtroopers.

"I'll do it!" I interjected."

The emphasis on action and neo-Western setting reassured Thomas that Star Wars wasn't going to be yet another dry sci-fi tale that despite their critical acclaim had become increasingly unpopular with audiences throughout the Seventies. Star Wars was space opera – with the bold characters, vivid locations and dynamic action that was necessary for a comic to be successful. He successfully fought for the first film to be adapted as a six issue story. The comics were a commercial smash hit, with the first issue selling over two million copies. Writer Tim O'Neil stresses the scarcity of the source material as a key element of the adaptation's popularity. "Things like novelizations and comic book adaptations were popular because there was simply no better way to hold on to movies once they passed out of first-run theaters... if you were a kid who loved Star Wars and wanted to relive the story on your own, it was really the only game in town. The idea of actually owning the film yourself, as a plastic disc or intangible data file to rewatch an infinite amount of times – that was science fiction."

The popularity of the comic meant that Marvel was understandably keen to keep the story going beyond merely retelling the story seen on the big screen. However back then there was no corporate structure to develop and enforce a common continuity. A big part of that was because Lucas was busily redefining the world he had created in light of the success of the first film and the surprise popularity of Darth Vader. Lucasfilm knew so little about

## 40 YEARS OF PASS THE PUBLISHER

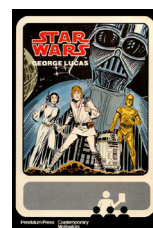
SINCE GEORGE LUCAS FIRST CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF MERCHANDISING THE CHARACTERS FROM HIS SPACE OPERA, COMICS HAVE BEEN AT THE HEART OF THE STAR WARS STORY, BUT PUBLISHERS HAVE COME AND GONE...

### [1977-1987] MARVEL COMICS



Stan Lee at Marvel was approached as far back as 1975 about creating a comic of this new movie coming out called Star Wars, he turned it down. Marvel was eventually persuaded it was a good idea, and the original Star Wars comic ran to 107 issues plus annuals and spin-offs Return of the Jedi, Ewoks and Droids.

### [1978] PENDULUM PRESS



You have to include it in a comprehensive list of publishers, but Pendulum Press' 31 page adaptation of the Star Wars story was more of an educational package for schools. It came with an audio tape and film strip attached and the story was rewritten to appeal to young children. Quite a collector's item if you can find one!

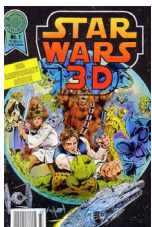




## THE POPULARITY OF THE COMIC MEANT THAT MARVEL WAS UNDERSTANDABLY KEEN TO KEEP THE STORY GOING BEYOND MERELY RETELLING THE STORY SEEN ON THE BIG SCREEN

[1987-1988]

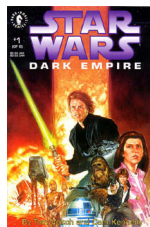
### BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING



Running for three issues from the Christmas of 1987, Blackthorne Publishing secured the license to create 3D comics from the Star Wars stories. 3D glasses were all the range in magazines and comics at the time. Dark Horse Comics would later reprint the comics in black and white, removing the 3D effect.

[1991-2014]

### DARK HORSE COMICS



With Marvel ceasing publishing in 1987 it would take Dark Horse to resurrect Star Wars comics. They initially published Dark Empire as a limited series before publishing our favourite, Knights of the Old Republic and many more. Their reward for doing such great work? Marvel snatched the license back when Disney bought Lucasfilm.

[2015-PRESENT]

### BACK TO MARVEL



Well if you spend \$4 billion on a franchise, you like to have a few extras thrown into the deal for good measure, and Disney got the comic license from Dark Horse and handed it on a golden platter to Marvel. Not only that, all licensed Star Wars novels, comics and books from 1977 onwards were declared non-canon. Thanks Mickey!





what was coming next, that those involved in the comics were unable to say anything meaningful about any of the characters featured in A New Hope.

Thomas' rather ingenious solution was to focus on Han Solo's career as a smuggler. In doing so, he was able to tell meaningful stories starring one of the film's most popular characters, without undermining its central plot of The Rebel Alliance battling The Empire. He would flesh out the Star Wars underworld with a host of smugglers and criminals, one of whom attracted the ire of the man who would later create Jar Jar Binks. Writer Marc Buxton, wrote in appreciation of the infamous Jaxxon. "What classic sci-fi saga is complete without a badass rabbit? Before Bucky O'Hare, before Usagi Yojimbo, before Captain Carrot, there was Jaxxon. Jaxxon is often cited as one of the sillier characters in Marvel's Star Wars run, but looking at it all from a modern perspective, Jaxxon was pretty awesome. It was up to Marvel's writers too populate Lucas' galaxy with characters and creatures of all shapes and sizes, so why not a spacefaring rabbit?"

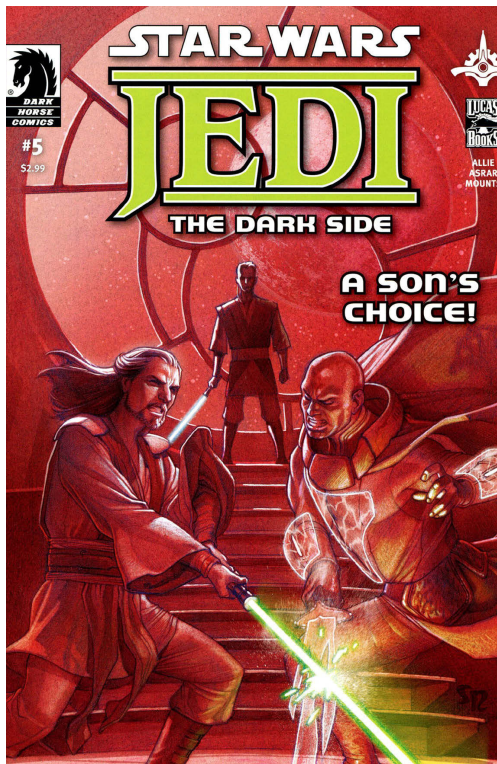
Jaxxon would feature in only a couple of issues before he was disappeared. Thomas got the message that his stories would be subject to interference from Lucasfilm, and left for projects that would give him greater creative freedom. Marvel's Star Wars comics would continue to be successful, with the series lasting for

an impressive 138 issues, but they never really made a lasting impression. In between faithful adaptations of A New Hope's two sequels, it would veer from either occupying the saga's heroes with inconsequential side quests or more involved storylines that would ultimately be contradicted by the films. Remarkably it was allowed to show life after the fall of the Empire, but its story of the former Rebel and Imperial factions uniting to repel an alien invasion found little favour with fans. With sales in freefall, the series was cancelled in 1987.

## SEEKING FRESH HORIZONS

By the late Eighties, Star Wars was at a crossroads. Exhausted from the strain of producing three blockbusters in (by the standards of the time) quick succession and with the saga's popularity having diminished, George Lucas abandoned his plans for a sequel trilogy. Instead he began looking at other mediums to continue the story of Star Wars. At the same time as the first novel of the new initiative was being developed, there was renewed interest in producing Star Wars comics. Writer Tom Veitch began discussing with Lucasfilm the potential for a new series set after Return of the Jedi. He would eventually produce Dark Empire with artist Cam Kennedy, a smash-hit that showed Luke Skywalker going undercover to defeat a





Over 13 years Dark Horse Comics published titles that spanned the full breadth of the Star Wars mythology, from the birth of the Republic to the aftermath of the Empire.

## DARK HORSE COMICS WERE AN ECLECTIC TOUR OF NOT JUST THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE AS DEPICTED IN THE FILMS, BUT ALSO ITS HISTORY AND FUTURE

returning Empire. “I loved that George Lucas gave us carte blanche to think up new ideas and stories”, recalled Veitch in 2007. “The first idea we gave him was that the Empire had preserved Vader’s costume, or a duplicate of it, and that they would put somebody else inside it, so that ‘Darth Vader’ could continue to inspire fear and obedience among the far-flung worlds of the Galaxy. George said ‘no’ to that. Our second idea was that the Emperor should continue to live, through the process of cloning. George said ‘yes’ to that.”

Even this level of oversight would quickly cease to occur, with Lucas showing a remarkable willingness to let other people play in his toolbox. In 2005 he explained his approach to what had become known as The Expanded Universe. “I don’t read that stuff. I haven’t read any of the novels. I don’t know anything about that world. That’s a different world than my world... When I said [other people] could make their own Star Wars stories, we decided that, like Star Trek, we would have two universes. My universe and then this other one. They try to make their universe as consistent with mine as possible, but obviously they get enthusiastic and want to go off in other directions.”

It was an approach that formalised the benign negligence that had characterised Lucasfilm’s oversight of the Eighties comics. The difference in the Nineties and Noughties was that the people in charge of the comics were far more ambitious. With Dark Empire, the rights were acquired by Dark Horse, an independent publisher who would become known as a specialist in producing high-quality comics based on television or film properties. Mike Richardson, the owner of Dark Horse, explained their approach. “After a history of movie properties being poorly handled with little regard for execution and continuity, Dark Horse took a new approach, carefully

choosing licenses and approaching them with excitement and creative energy. Our goal was to create sequels and prequels to the films we loved, paying careful attention to quality and detail, essentially treating those films as though they were our own.”

The resulting Dark Horse comics were an eclectic tour of not just the Star Wars universe as depicted in the films, but also its history and future. Dark Horse would publish comics about the early battles between the Jedi and Sith orders, the rise of both the Republic and the Empire, and how the galaxy rebuilds after Palpatine is overthrown. It was an approach that was widely appreciated by Star Wars’ most hardcore fans. “What I miss the most is that the Expanded Universe truly made me feel like I was entering a galaxy far, far away that was even bigger than the one I saw in the canon films and TV series,” reflected James Akinaka, an administrator of an online Star Wars encyclopaedia.

However, Disney’s purchase of Lucasfilm quickly brought a close to the Dark Horse’s 13-year stewardship of the saga’s comics. It was time to go home.

### MARVEL COMICS AWAKENS

With Disney owning both Lucasfilm and America’s most successful comics company, it was inevitable that Star Wars would be coming home. What is surprising is the scope and ambition of the company’s plans.

With its line of Star Wars comics, Marvel is trying something that they are decidedly not doing with their Avengers titles – integrate the comics into a coherent narrative that spans all mediums. “We’re trying to work towards one cohesive saga and





universe,” said group editor Jordan White in 2015. “So it can be really tough, but I think in the end it’s pretty rewarding. So we’re pretty happy about it.” This means that for the first time ever, Star Wars would bring together the comics, television, books and films into a single, unified canon.

It is no exaggeration to say that such an approach is unprecedented. When comics have been confirmed as ‘official’ publications whose stories contribute to canon, it has been because the TV or film series has ceased production. A good example of this approach is Joss Whedon using comics to continue to tell stories in the Buffy-universe long after the television series finished. What is happening with Star Wars is very different. This is a significant investment in developing a new continuity. As explained by John Jackson Miller, the author of 2014’s novel *Star Wars: A New Dawn*, at its heart is the Lucasfilm Story Group. “This is a collaboration between the people working on the movies, on the TV series like *Rebels*, the fiction people, and the comics people as well, with the licensees.”

The impact this has on the comics is that everything produced by Marvel is sent to Lucasfilm to be vetted. “We send them everything,” recounts White. “We send them the scripts; we get notes back on the scripts. We send them the art; we get notes back on the art. We send them the final comic, and we get notes on that as well. We work together to make sure that we’re telling good stories, that we’re telling stories that will fit into the new canon, that we’re not contradicting other novels or other videogames they’re working on, or other movies they’re working on, or other TV shows they’re working on, and to make sure that everything adds up to one giant story rather than just a bunch of stuff that is tangentially connected.”

Kieron Gillen, the author of *Darth Vader*, gave an example of how this vetting even applies to characters created for the comics. “When I wrote the script and sent it to Lucasfilm – well the outline anyway – I was like, “If there’s any way you think Vader wouldn’t kill Thanos, please say it.” I was kind of hoping they would overrule me. But no, they agreed with me. Vader would have to kill him.”

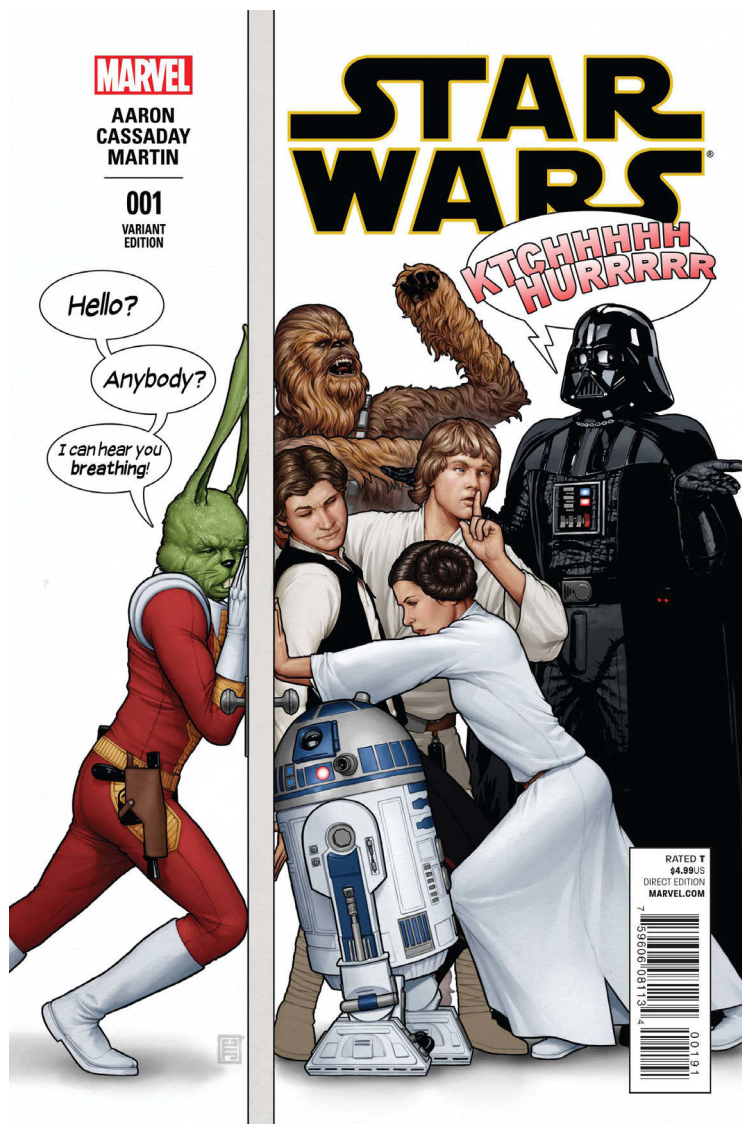
The prize Marvel secures through all this hard work is that its stories can shape the mythos of the characters that creators and readers grew up following. “When we showed *Darth Vader* learning Luke Skywalker was his son, and that that’s who blew up the Death Star, that is how he learns it now,” White explains. “That is that moment across all Star Wars media. That is the new canon version. So that benefit is terrific, because it lends a weight to our stories.” In a world where Marvel struggles to persuade fans that its comics have equal worth to its more popular Marvel Cinematic and Television Universes, and the X-Men movies can’t maintain continuity from one film to the next, it’s a significant achievement.

But it raises a question. Can it last?

## GEORGE’S MARVELLOUS MONEYMAKING MACHINE

Star Wars is properly credited with creating the template for the Hollywood blockbuster. A key part of this template was its revolutionary approach to merchandising. George Lucas rolled out licensing deals that saw the faces of its leading heroes and villains stamped onto a wide range of products. Indeed, it was this push to monetise the film’s characters and story that led to the publication of the original comic series.





While Marvel launched their new Star Wars comic with a playful nod to Jaxxon they have high hopes that Dr Aphra will succeed where he failed.



Ironically, the potential to generate extra revenue from popular characters and stories is one of the reasons that the Star Wars comics were never critically acclaimed. Comics based on characters licenced from television or movies have always been popular – indeed the sales of the original Star Wars comics helped save Marvel from financial ruin in the late Seventies. But neither Marvel nor DC Comics invested much effort into licence titles due to a desire to focus their efforts on creating or fine-tuning characters that could feature on toys, lunchboxes, clothes, cartoons and films. The revolutionary change in the Star Wars comics is that Marvel and Lucasfilm are now part of the same Disney family. Today, should Marvel create a winning character or concept for the Star Wars Universe, all the benefits will flow to their owners.

It is this exchange that could prove crucial. Dark Horse created scores, if not hundreds, of new characters and concepts, but Lucasfilm never showed any interest in running with these ideas. This disinterest stopped the comics from proving themselves an inexpensive but effective testing ground for new intellectual property that could ultimately be more lucratively used in films, television and merchandise. This failure not only made the comics less lucrative to corporations, but less meaningful to readers. It was hard to maintain the fiction that the stories depicted in the comics mattered if they were always ignored or contradicted by the mediums with higher profiles. With its close working relationship with the Lucasfilm Story Group, Marvel has a golden opportunity to escape this negative feedback loop. And just two years into the new era, they may have found the perfect characters. We've already spoken about how Darth Vader has been praised for its portrayal of

the Dark Lord of the Sith's redemption, but perhaps even more exciting is the original supporting cast that Kieron Gillen and Salvador Larroca created. From the fourth issue, Vader shared his title with the tomb-thieving archaeologist Dr. Aphra, and her murderous droids. Aphra was the Han Solo to Vader's Luke, contrasting her charismatic cynicism with his unbending devotion to the Force. Meanwhile Triple-Zero and Bee-Tee maximise the potential amusement from the high-concept joke of turning C-3PO and R2-D2 into caustic mass murderers.

This month they were promoted to their own comic, with Dr. Aphra replacing Darth Vader in Marvel's publication schedule. Gillen is understandably excited about what the future holds. "My favourite thing is the archaeology aspect in Star Wars, because Star Wars is a very old universe. That's kind of the point of it. So she can get into these really weird, old cave systems and have weird stuff happen to her. That's what the book kind of runs off. It's like a high adventure book. It's the adventure archaeology book, running around the Star Wars universe, and getting into trouble."

Should Dr. Aphra successfully build on the success of Darth Vader then Marvel will have created something very special. The question then becomes whether Lucasfilm will be willing to capitalise on this momentum and feature these characters in other media. If they do, then the deaths of Jaxxon and the Expanded Universe will not have been in vain, as comics will finally be a truly integral part of the Star Wars universe. **GM**

Issue 26 of the new Star Wars comic run was published on 7 December by Marvel Comics.



## MORTAL KOMBAT

YEAR, 1995 // STUDIO, NEW LINE CINEMA // DIRECTOR, PAUL W. S. ANDERSON  
STARRING, LINDEN ASHBY, CARY-HIROYUKI TAGAWA, ROBIN SHOU

# FINISH HIM...

**Words: HUGH DAVID**

Hugh has watched every cult movie... at least twice.

As we reach the end of the Resident Evil movie franchise, in the year the Warcraft movie made a ton of money while leaving (mostly) non-gamers baffled, it's possible that maybe one of the first ever movie adaptations of videogames was actually one of the best. Newcastle helmer Paul W. S. Anderson, fan of videogames and alternative music scenes, followed up his flashy-but-hollow near-future-set FilmFour debut *Shopping* with this American low-budgeter for New Line Cinema, and he made it into a smash hit, the first game to movie project to do so. (Super Mario Bros., Double Dragon and Street Fighter: The Movie failed at the box-office and with fans.)

Anderson did this through a canny combo of Hong Kong-style fights, cheap-but-cheesy CG effects work and fan-favourite nods, effectively defining the formula for future attempts at success (he himself would repeat and refine it with his adaptation of Resident Evil). Not everything was like the game, then about to emerge in its third iteration, but it had sufficient resemblance of characters, moves and dialogue to make it clear the film was built on the first two games (the film credited game writers Ed Boon and John Tobias, although the script itself was credited to TV scribe Kevin Droney, who would go on to do the Wing Commander adaptation). Apparently Boon and Tobias retconned Kano's backstory in later games to match the (Australian?) accent British actor Trevor Goddard gave the character here in the film, which if true is a rare case of the adap influencing back the source material.

The finished production itself chooses to reference the kind of films that inspired beat-'em-up games in the first place, giving non-videogame moviegoers their way in. Chief among these is the core plot, borrowed from Bruce Lee's *Enter The Dragon*, of an international variety of skilled fighters brought together on an island to fight a tournament that turns out to have more riding on it than just a prize. Several casting choices acted in similar fashion: Christopher Lambert as Thunder God Rayden references the previous decade's time-hopping swords and sorcery smash-hit *Highlander*; Robin Shou and Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa as the American-Asian leads (monk Liu Kang and sorcerer Shang Tsung) nod to both Eastern and Western B-movie traditions, while the latter and Talisa Soto as Princess Kitana were both alumni of the last Bond film at that time, *Licence To Kill* (Goldeneye was released in the UK the month after *Mortal Kombat*).

Getting the film off the starting blocks through to cinemas was by all accounts a difficult process, from a script New Line hated but started with anyway, to turning one of the most legendarily violent videogames into a PG-13 movie. Along the way input from the game writers, the director, the cast, SFX folks, and the fight choreographers all helped get the movie over the finish line, although expensive re-shoots were called for following an audience test screening of a rough cut after the Thailand shoot wrapped. These, however, along with Robin Shou's Hong Kong stunt experiences applied to them, gave the film two of the best fights that still hold up now: Johnny Cage Vs Scorpion and Liu Kang Vs Reptile. The latter taking place in the other dimension,



## LINDEN ASHBY AS CAGE PAID FOR THE ACTION AS ALL HK ACTORS DO, WITH BROKEN RIBS AND PEEING BLOOD

Outworld, is where we finally see Shou perform Kang's special moves the bicycle kick and fireball. Both Shou and Linden Ashby as Cage paid for the action as all HK actors do, with broken ribs and peeing blood from a bruised kidney.

Bringing HK-style fights and wirework to Western audiences wasn't the only lasting innovation; the use of electronic dance music for the soundtrack, techno blended with live instruments for the score as well as tracks from various performers including Buckethead and Utah Saints, enhanced the 'arcade' feel to the film, and went platinum in less time than the film was at No. 1 in the US box office. For all the brickbats Anderson takes, *Mortal Kombat* still stands as ground-breaking, memorably fun and financially successful; not bad for a videogame movie. **GM**

Warner Home Video released a triple box set of *Mortal Kombat*, *Mortal Kombat Annihilation* and *Mortal Kombat Legacy* in October.







## [CLASSIC GAME]

### Dizzy

YEAR, 1987-2011 // FORMAT, MANY  
// DEVELOPER, THE OLIVER TWINS, ET AL  
// PUBLISHER, CODEMASTERS

I have long had a soft spot for Dizzy, the 8-bit adventure game starring a small egg with boots on. The original game on the ZX Spectrum from June 1987 was released one month before I started writing for Crash magazine, so Dizzy and I go back a long way. While I missed reviewing that original 'Ultimate Cartoon Adventure', I reviewed every game that came out since, and was lucky enough to earn quotes on the cassette inlays of many of them.

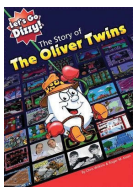
Each game The Oliver Twins devised built on the tricks learned in the last. Treasure Island Dizzy improved the inventory system and upped the puzzle element; Fantasy World Dizzy introduced us to the Yolkfolk – Dizzy's extended family who all needed something from the little egg; Magicland Dizzy was cheeky, using a powerpill to get past ghosts, and also the first game not to be developed by The Oliver Twins. But it will always be the original Dizzy that I remember most fondly, probably because I bought it as a punter and played it constantly.

Okay, I realise that not everyone is a 40-something who remembers when games took five minutes to load and you often played them on a black and white portable TV, making colour clash irrelevant. If you are yet to experience a Dizzy game in your life, get yourself over to [yolkfolk.com](http://yolkfolk.com) where you can download the classic games and give them a go. They are simple by today's standards of course, but at their core you will still find ingenious gameplay, devilish puzzles and a glint of the gold that helped build the British games industry through the 80s and 90s.

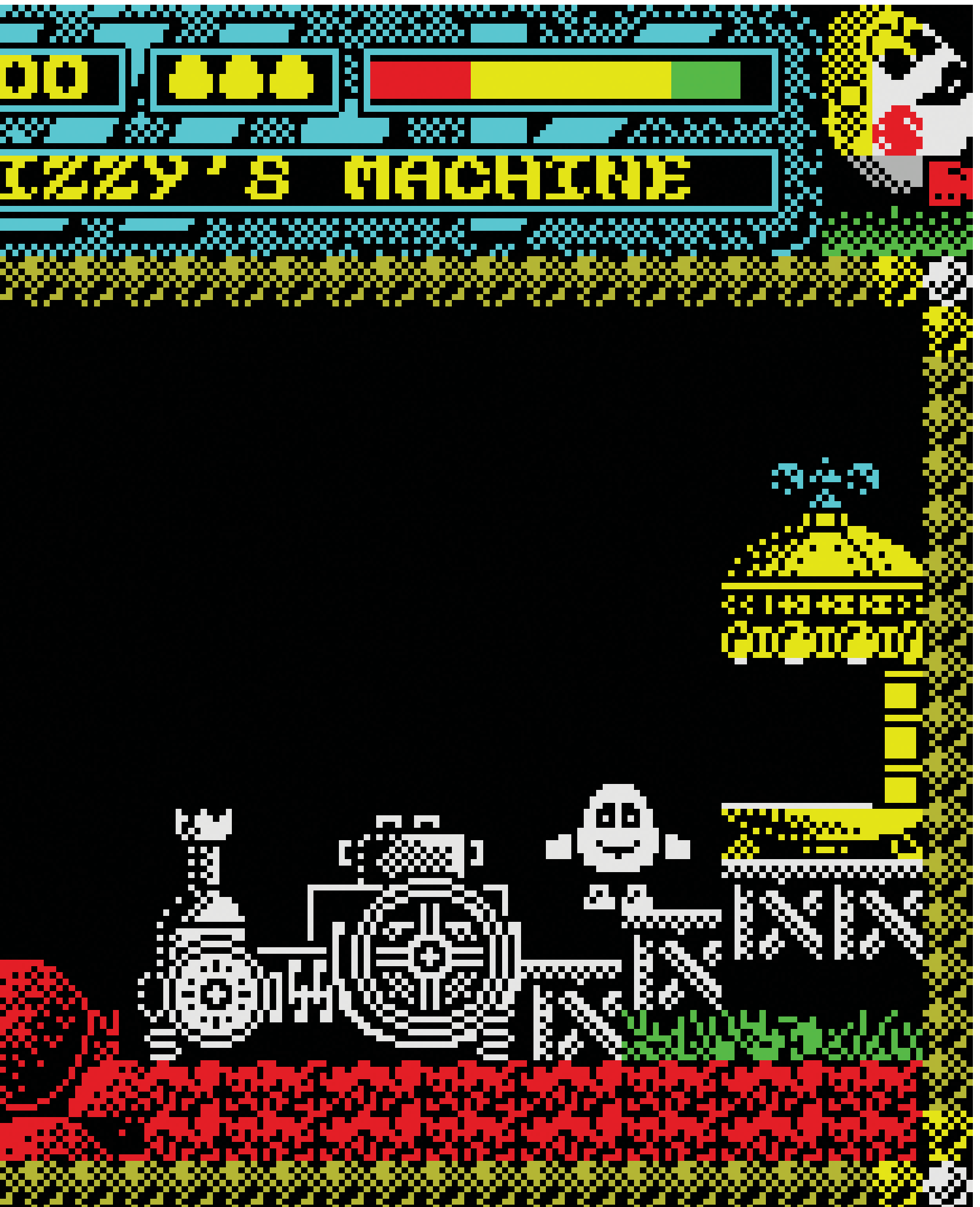
Celebrating their work, developers The Oliver Twins have just released a book of their early career. The Story of The Oliver Twins has been written with Chris Wilkins and Roger Kean, but with full cooperation of these pioneers of early adventure games. Philip and Andrew Oliver have obviously had a blast searching through old boxes, notebooks, disks and cassettes, reminiscing about past game successes and pondering why some games never saw the light of day. Packed with photos of the good old days of gaming, appearances on kids' TV shows like Swap Shop and Tiswas, and even the first ever 'type in' listing that Philip Oliver had published for the Dragon 32 computer, it's a book that knows its audience. Eggcellent reading for all kids of the 80s. The great thing about retro gaming is it just gets better with age.

**Nick Roberts**

The Story of The Oliver Twins is available now from [fusionretrobooks.com](http://fusionretrobooks.com) priced £24.99.









## Elementary, my dear...

HE MAY BE ONE OF THE BUSIEST ACTORS RIGHT NOW, BUT BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH TOOK TIME OUT TO TALK WITH GEEKY MONKEY ABOUT TEACHING IN NEPAL, BECOMING STRANGE AND THE NEW SHERLOCK...



### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- HEARTBEAT** [1998-2004]  
// ITV
- SILENT WITNESS** [2002]  
// BBC
- ATONEMENT** [2007]  
// FOCUS FEATURES
- TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY** [2011]  
// FOCUS FEATURES
- WAR HORSE** [2011]  
// WALT DISNEY
- FRANKENSTEIN** [2011]  
// ROYAL NATIONAL THEATRE
- THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY** [2012]  
// WARNER BROS
- STAR TREK INTO DARKNESS** [2013]  
// PARAMOUNT PICTURES
- THE IMITATION GAME** [2014]  
// STUDIOCANAL
- DOCTOR STRANGE** [2016]  
// MARVEL STUDIOS
- SHERLOCK** [2010-PRESENT]  
// BBC

### **Congratulations on the great performance in Doctor Strange. You spent a year in Nepal teaching English – is returning their to film like a happy full circle?**

Not actually in Nepal, I was in Darjeeling, well a place called Sanadu, near Darjeeling in West Bengal where I taught English for five, six months in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, in a converted Nepali house in this tiny hill station in India with Nepali and Chinese cultures all swimming around, and obviously Indian culture – yeah, it was a whole different world of education that I'd been exposed to up till I was 19. And it was everything that I could have expected and everything I couldn't, a real life changer to see that ritual and that culture up close, and to take part in it myself.

We did go to Kathmandu, but just for a day, so it was amazing in the beginning of filming to go there first, to go back to a place that's formidable and so very different, and really important to be there because of the earthquake, which happened seven months before, and I was absolutely adamant that we had to forge ahead filming there and Marvel and the insurers were like, "no we're gonna do it, don't worry." It was good, it was fantastic for them but far more fantastic for us, and a nice reminder of my teaching experience.

### **What did your experience of spirituality at the monastery lend to playing Doctor Strange?**

Well I am a cynic like he is, I wasn't damaged, I wasn't in need of healing, I went in there curious with my eyes wide open and expectant. And Strange is so violently non-expectant that he's so blown away by 'the magical mystery tour' as we're calling it when she opens his mind. Yeah, as regards shaping similarities and circumstances, I had this Western upbringing and was experiencing Eastern mysticism for the first time in my life. It was very profound and I guess what carried through to the film was the idea of the power of the mind shaping your reality.

All forms of meditation aren't so much a religion but a way of life, it's about the ability to still your mind and practice mindfulness, which in the Sixties was very new, but now it's something that is taught in corporations, it's not distant any more.

### **I have to admit I never saw you doing a super hero role, you're better known for your more serious work.**

Well Sherlock Holmes is something of a super hero, don't you think? As far as the actors that Marvel works with, you just think of Anthony Hopkins, in other franchises, you've got Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen. We're actors, we need jobs, and this has an appeal because it's so utterly different, it's such a huge film and that obviously has a draw. It's also about being an action hero, learning kung fu and stunt moves, and having a transformation, not only in my body but in my voice, playing something I haven't played before, I've never played an American hero, that

was a lot of fun to play a New Yorker you know, this self-made man who's this arrogant neurosurgeon who goes on this incredible arc to 'superherodom' and in the process, learns that's it not all about him.

It's fantastic, with a lot of comedy and drama in between the action, It's been a fantastic ride to go on. And I didn't know much about the character before they approached me. A couple of people had already mentioned it as a good idea. In fact, a journalist said it to me on the roof of Bad Robot when I was promoting Star Trek and I went and read it and people who knew him well told me he was a fantastic character.

### **Do you care about career moves at all?**

No, no, it's about me giving myself a surprise and doing something that I haven't done. Of course I've played clever people before, and arrogant, I've done that a few times, but he's American, he's materialistic, he's slightly sociopathic, he has a life, he has a relationship, one that finished because it was all about him and less about her, it's different space than I've occupied before and that's usually the grounding for me. And the older I get, it's about the people I want to work with, especially directors I want to work with, that's a leading criteria. And I have my own production company, I'm interested in making cinema that I'd like to see, it's not just about being in it. To see projects from their inception to their completion is a new journey as well.

### **You've previously voiced your dislike of fame so playing Doctor Strange probably won't help that. Are you more content with your celebrity?**

You get on with it, you just get on with it. That's the only way I can cope with it. I'm loving the work I do so I have to deal with the consequences, and I think I'm dealing with that as best as I can.

### **You weren't too happy with the Cumberbitches?**

The people who first named themselves that were a very clever smart group of girls with ages ranging from 20 to 40, and they did it as a joke because bitch and batch sound similar. They didn't mean for it to be offensive and I just pointed out as it got bigger that maybe it would be good opportunity to show that it's from the heart and it's not aggressive. It was just people having fun, enjoying what I do. I never really had a big problem with it, I just suggested that there was some slightly softer name.

### **Strange goes through a life changing experience that opens his mind, have you experienced similar, things that have had the same effect?**

A fair few, which have been much mulled over so I won't bore you with the details; when I was teaching in West Bengal, that was pretty life-changing; during my trip to Nepal, I got lost during these placements and we got lost for about 48 hours in Nepal and that was scary as



well. I had a big life incident in South Africa where two of us got car jacked. Now I'm a father, and anyone who's experienced that knows how life changing that can be. That was probably the biggest thing to ever happen to me. Undoubtedly.

**These kinds of movies will clearly win you some dad points with your kids down the line?**

Well it's a little early to tell but perhaps in the future, we'll see. We'll see.

**Looking back, was it Sherlock that launched everything?**

Did the phone ring off the hook after Sherlock? Well, it got very busy when three significant things happened at the same time – Danny Boyle, who's never seen Sherlock, wanted me to be in *Frankenstein*; and I had Tomas Alfredson cast me in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and just as it was released, well Spielberg had already offered me the part in *War Horse*, so these were really big films. And then there was *Sherlock*, so it was, you know, a cluster of things and I'm eternally grateful.

**Did you ever struggle for work before that?**

No, I was working, always working, doing work that I loved, theatre, television, wasn't always the lead. I started out in this profession with two parents who had two very successful careers, who had the respect of their peers and had a good time doing a job that time can be very tough on, because of timing, because of the odd hours all the time. So I always thought, "if I do half as good a job as they're doing, I'll be fine." And then it kind of snowballed, but their standards were always the standards that I wanted to be at.

**There has been a lot of conjecture as regards Sherlock, will there be more, will there not? There was a story out that you were done for good.**

I don't think I've ever spoken about that, and I must say, it's the irresponsible wing of your profession picking up on something I said out of context in an article. It's for you to untangle the mess.

Whatever is out there now, I feel like a journalist was getting squeezed by his editor, and I understand because art stories are getting pressurised because art desks are always under pressure. I have friends at *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian*, and there's this squeeze going on were you have to come up with click bait...

You never say never with Sherlock. I've just finished filming this one, and there's obviously going to be a lull and as you'll see from the story, there's quite a lot that comes to a head. There might a longer gap between this one and the next one. So all I can say is, never say never. **GM**

**Sherlock returns for series four on BBC One 1 January, Doctor Strange is in cinemas now from Marvel.**



**YOU NEVER SAY NEVER WITH SHERLOCK. I'VE JUST FINISHED FILMING THIS ONE, AND THERE'S OBVIOUSLY GOING TO BE A LULL**



NEXT MONTH

# THE SCIENCE BEHIND STAR TREK

ON SALE 26 JANUARY

DIRK GENTLY INTERVIEW // ZAXXON THE BOARD GAME  
HAS RETRO GONE TOO FAR? // THE JOKER COSPLAY

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